

Lebanon insists on land-for-peace formula

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buzeh said on Monday that peace talks with Israel cannot resume except on the basis of exchanging occupied Arab territory for peace, a formula set at the 1991 Madrid peace conference. "Up to this moment, the Israeli government is still adhering to headlines that are in total contradiction to what we have reached (in Madrid)," Mr. Buzeh told reporters at Beirut airport before heading for Paris. "Therefore, we cannot resume these negotiations except from the point they have reached, meaning the point of confirming the principle of land-for-peace or from the point of confirming the (Israeli) pullouts provided that the details or schedule of this activity is agreed upon," he added. The Madrid peace conference, which drew Arab and Israeli delegates to the negotiating table for the first time, set the formula of exchanging occupied Arab land for peace with the Jewish state as the basis for the Middle East peace process.

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Pope hopes to visit Holy Land in 1999

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Pope John Paul II hopes to visit the Holy Land in the next three years, a Vatican envoy told Israel's chief Rabbi on Monday. "He expressed a great wish to come and especially if possible before the year 2000," Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy told Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau. "I think there is no doubt that he wishes to do that and he wishes certainly to do it at the latest in the year 1999." Cardinal Cassidy said the visit would not take place this year. "I would hope that it would be in 1999 but no date has yet been set," he told the Associated Press. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invited the Pope to visit Israel when the two leaders met at the Vatican last Monday. Israel and the Holy See established diplomatic relations in December 1993. Rabbi Lau noted that he had also extended an invitation on behalf of then-Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to the Pope in September 1993.

Arafat expected to visit Russia

MOSCOW (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is likely to visit Moscow next week and a Palestinian official said on Monday that Arafat would hold talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. "There is of course a meeting with the president," the official from the Palestinian representation in Moscow said. "They will discuss mutual relations and the peace process in the Middle East."

Israel settles PNA phone bill

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli government settled a 60 million shekel (\$18.1 million) telephone bill owed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Bezeq Israel Telecom said on Monday. "The treasury will subtract the sum from the money it is supposed to transfer to the PNA and give it to Bezeq as soon as possible," Bezeq said in a statement. Under an economic accord, the Israeli government hands over to the self-rule administration in the West Bank and Gaza tax revenues collected from Palestinians working in the Jewish state. Bezeq said it would now pay the treasury 45.5 million shekels in fourth-quarter 1996 royalties that it had withheld pending settlement of the PNA's bill.

Car escorting Netanyahu crashes

TEL AVIV (AP) — A police car escorting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to his office ran a red light and crashed into a private car Monday, police said. Six people were slightly injured. The patrol car went through an intersection at a red light with sirens blaring and hit the second car, police said. A volunteer policeman, a police officer and one of Mr. Netanyahu's bodyguards were injured in the crash, as well as the three passengers in the private vehicle, police said. The injured were treated at nearby hospitals and released. The accident happened as Mr. Netanyahu was on his way to the office from home Monday morning.

Israeli-allied militia releases 7 prisoners

MARJAYOUN (AP) — An Israeli-backed militia in southern Lebanon released seven detainees Monday. The men were freed from the Khiam detention centre in a border enclave that Israel occupies with the help of the South Lebanon army militia. They were taken home in red cross vehicles. The militia did not say how long it had detained the men, who were suspected of working with Hizbollah guerrillas. The militia, which is financed, armed and trained by Israel, regularly releases prisoners on religious feasts.

Court orders Priebeke retrial

ROME (AFP) — former Nazi officer Erich Priebeke will be retried by a military court over the wartime massacre of 335 civilians, Italy's highest court ruled Monday, judicial officials said. Mr. Priebeke, 83, was found guilty of involvement in the murders last year by a military tribunal but ordered freed because of mitigating circumstances. The controversial verdict last August sparked a worldwide outcry. The verdict was subsequently overturned by the supreme court, which ruled that the suspect would have to be retried. Mr. Priebeke is currently in jail pending retrial. A court in Rome last month turned down an appeal by his lawyer to release the former SS officer. Prosecutor General Bruno Giannini favoured a military tribunal, while lawyers for civilian relatives of the victims wanted the case to go to a civilian court. Both the military tribunal and the civilian criminal courts had declared themselves not competent to try Mr. Priebeke, creating a legal headache.

Israeli cabinet debates further schedules for pullback in West Bank

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a run-up to a U.S. visit this week, convened his cabinet in special session on Monday to begin discussion of further troop pullouts from the West Bank, officials said. Mr. Netanyahu is to hold talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton on Thursday. The cabinet session followed a summit late on Sunday between Mr. Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The Monday meeting centred on presentations by senior military planning and legal officials, who discussed a timetable for future withdrawals, division of military responsibilities, and other issues, the cabinet secretary said in a statement. "The cabinet will discuss further questions of the redeployment towards the end of the month," he said. No decisions were taken at the Monday meeting, officials said.

The Israeli-Palestinian National Authority (PNA) agreement on Hebron set March 7 as the start of a three-stage troop withdrawal from rural areas still under Israeli occupation in the West Bank. The pullbacks are to be completed by mid-1998.

In a peace breakthrough in January, Israel handed 80 per cent of Hebron to PNA rule, ending months of rancorous debate both with the Palestinians and within Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing cabinet. Mr. Arafat arrived in Hebron on Monday to spend the last day of 'Eid Al Fitr in the West Bank.

His two-day visit could coincide with the release by Israel of 25 Palestinian women prisoners. Asked when the women would be freed, Mr. Arafat told Reuters after his arrival he expected "very good news within the next few hours." He did not elaborate.

Officials from both sides said the women would be released either on Monday or Tuesday.

David Bar-Ilan, Mr. Netanyahu's top aide, said military officials made a general presentation to the cabinet on Monday of what the next withdrawals would involve. No decision has been made on the scope of the withdrawals, he said.

Some cabinet ministers — including Infra-

structures Minister Ariel Sharon — had complained they were being left out of the decision-making process on negotiations with the Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat met Sunday night to discuss disputes over implementing the accords.

The Yediot Achronot newspaper reported that Israel plans to withdraw from a further five per cent of West Bank territory in the March pullout. At present, the PNA has full control over only three per cent of the West Bank — the major cities — and limited power in 24 per cent.

According to the Israeli and U.S. interpretation of the accords, Israel has full authority to decide how much additional land to hand over to self-rule during the interim period.

The definitive future of the Palestinian territories is to be worked out in so-called final status negotiations which are to resume by mid-March and be concluded by May 1999.

The Palestinians say that by the end of the three upcoming Israeli withdrawals, they should control up to 90 per cent of the West Bank, but Mr. Netanyahu has not revealed his plans to the public.

Israeli press reports this week said the first new redeployment would concern only an additional three to five per cent of West Bank territory, which would pass from full Israeli control to Palestinian civilian control.

Such a handover would not have to involve a withdrawal of Israeli troops and thus was considered unlikely to arouse much protest from right-wing members of government who oppose further extensions of Palestinian autonomy.

The handover is to take place by the first week of March. Foreign Minister David Levy told army radio on Monday the cabinet faced a decision on whether the withdrawal would be made in areas currently under joint Israeli-PNA control, or if territory now under exclusive Israeli authority would also be handed over to Palestinian self-rule.

Prior to the Hebron pullout — agreed with

(Continued on page 3)

National Front wins another municipal poll

PARIS (AP) — French mainstream political leaders on Monday were downplaying the far-right National Front's electoral capture of a fourth city hall, though some media were calling it "a historic incident."

Catherine Megret, candidate of the anti-immigrant front, was elected mayor of Vitrolles Sunday, despite a united effort by the governing conservatives and opposition socialists to defeat her. The election in Vitrolles, a small southern town of 39,000, was closely watched as a test of the influence of front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.

"Who can say the National Front is not capable of becoming the leading political party in France," Mr. Le Pen asked after the Vitrolles results were announced. But members of Prime Minister Alain Juppe's conservative majority on Monday quickly sought to spin the front victory as a political aberration.

"You have to put this into its proper perspective," Social Affairs Minister Jacques Barrot said. "This was a very particular situation."

Vitrolles' higher-than-average joblessness and heavily immigrant population made the city an easier target for the front, which blames North African immigrants for France's post-war record 12.7 per cent unemployment.

The head of Israel's Jewish Agency expressed his deep concern at the election victory of the anti-immigration front.

"The struggle against xenophobia, racism and anti-

Semitism rests with all those in the world who defend liberty and democracy," said Avraham Burg, whose semi-governmental agency is in charge of relations with Jews abroad and immigration.

"We must put the issue of immigration to Israel by Jews from France back on the agenda," he said in a letter to Henri Hajdenberg, chairman of the Representative Council of Jewish institutions in France.

In 1996, about 2,000 Jews from France, out of a community of more than 650,000 people, emigrated to Israel.

Though the National Front also has won the city halls of Toulon, Orange and Marignane — all mid-sized southern cities with large immigrant populations — the party holds no seats in the French parliament. Mr. Le Pen won 15 per cent of national votes in the 1995 presidential elections, and polls show he would fare no better now.

Urban Affairs Minister Eric Raoult said credit for the front's Vitrolles victory was due less to Mr. Le Pen's promises to expel immigrants than to compromises by mainstream parties.

"With unemployment, with immigration, the left should come back to the left and the right should have no shame to be itself," he said. "We shouldn't give the National Front the chance to represent this alternative."

Ms. Megret won 52.5 per cent of Sunday's votes, beating her socialist opponent, Jean-Jacques Anglade, who

(Continued on page 3)

Israel to aid firms to build colonies

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Israeli government plans to provide generous loan guarantees to firms which set up in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the finance ministry said on Sunday.

Finance Minister Dan Meridor has already submitted a proposal to the parliamentary finance committee which would provide state backing for 85 per cent of loans contracted to set up businesses in the settlements, a ministry spokesman said.

The guarantees were suspended by the previous labour government which froze most settlement activity in order to facilitate peace talks with the Palestinians. Since coming to power in June, Mr. Netanyahu has lifted the previous government's freeze on settlement activity and offered widespread grants and other incentives to Israeli residents and businesses in the occupied territories.

Despite these incentives, the finance ministry spokesman said, businesses have run into "serious difficulties in trying to obtain bank loans" because financial institutions do not like the risks involved in operating in the territories.

Some 140,000 Israelis live in 144 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The fate of the settlements is due to be determined in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on a permanent peace agreement. The talks are scheduled to begin in mid-March and conclude by May 1999.



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat holds hands with Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe (left) as the Palestinian leader is welcomed to the West Bank town on Monday with a round of applause and congratulated on the occasion of 'Eid Al Fitr (Reuters photo)

Israeli court clears way for freeing Palestinian women

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's supreme court on Monday rejected a petition seeking to bar the imminent release of 23 Palestinian women held for anti-Israeli activities.

The court ruling lifted the last obstacle to the release of the prisoners, which was expected to go ahead on Tuesday, more than a year behind schedule.

The petition was filed by the "terror victims" association and the family of Zvi Klein, who was killed in a 1991 drive-by shooting by a group of Palestinian radicals led by Abir Wahidi, one of the 23 women due to be freed.

In his ruling, Chief Justice Aharon Barak said the prisoner release was allowable under legal precedents set by similar previous group pardons of Palestinians.

All female Palestinian prisoners were to have been released immediately on the signature in September 1995 of the Oslo interim peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

But President Ezer Weizman and the head of the Israeli army in the West Bank refused to sign pardon orders for four of the women on grounds they had been involved in the killing of Israelis.

The other female detainees stayed in their cells in solidarity with the four.

Mr. Netanyahu agreed to go ahead with the prisoner release as part of a Jan. 15 deal which led to the with-

King, Weizman exchange views

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Sunday exchanged on the phone views with Israeli President Ezer Weizman. The two leaders also reviewed the peace process, efforts for confidence-building measures and the full implementation of Oslo accord, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. King Hussein thanked President Weizman for his move to release Palestinian women imprisoned in Israeli jails.

drawal of Israeli troops from most of the West Bank city of Hebron.

The deal also reaffirmed Israel's other commitments under the 1995 Oslo accords.

But at a meeting Sunday night with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Mr. Netanyahu refused to free several women detained after the 1995 agreement. There are believed to be five or six such female prisoners in Israeli jails.

The decision to free even prisoners who killed Israelis raised a storm of protest from MPs in Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing coalition government and Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi said Monday he would not sign pardons for three of the 23 women.

A justice ministry official said the pardons would instead be signed either by Mr. Weizman, who has withdrawn his opposition to the move, or Mr. Netanyahu.

In their appeal against the release, the terror victims association warned that the pardons amounted to "moral bankruptcy which will put an end to the rule of law."

The group also claimed the release would endanger

Israeli lives by showing that Palestinian killers of Israelis do not have to fear lengthy jail terms.

In a bid to appease Israelis angered by the prisoner release, some right-wing politicians have demanded the government also free Jewish militants serving jail terms for killing Arabs (see page 12).

Twelve names have been put forward, including Ami Popper who was sentenced to seven life prison terms for the 1990 murders of seven Palestinian workers.

Hisham Abdul Raziaq, the main Palestinian negotiator on prisoners, told AFP the 23 prisoners would be released on Tuesday from the Telmoed prison outside Tel Aviv.

They will be taken immediately to a reception hosted by Arafat somewhere in the West Bank, he said.

Mr. Arafat visited Hebron on Monday in expectation of the release of 23 female Palestinian prisoners, the most immediate measure laid down by the Hebron accord.

Palestinian sources said Mr. Arafat would host a welcoming party for the women after their release.

Lima, rebels to restart crisis talks

LIMA (R) — Peru's government and Marxist rebels holding 72 hostages readied for the restart of direct talks as President Alberto Fujimori on Monday sought to assure British investors the two-month crisis had not hurt the country's viability.

Speaking in London, Mr. Fujimori also said on Monday there was no chance of a ransom being paid to 15 heavily armed Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) hostage-takers holed up in the Japanese ambassador's house in Lima.

But he told British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio he was hopeful preliminary face-to-face talks slated to start on Tuesday could lead to a peaceful solution of the 55-day-old crisis.

"As a government we don't accept this kind of ransom payment. I think that all governments, not just Peruvian but around the world, must not accept these kinds of crimes and later pay ransom," he said.

Later in a speech at a forum on British investment in Latin America, Mr. Fujimori reiterated that the Dec. 17 seizure of the residence was an isolated event that did not affect the economy. He also insisted his government has crushed Peru's two leftist guerrilla groups.

The storming of the residence during a cocktail party attended by hundreds of VIPs "is not the product of organisations such as those that existed between 1980 and 1992," he said.

"Both the MRTA and Shining Path have been dismantled," Mr. Fujimori said. "Today there are still some terrorists, as there are in other countries, who seek to draw attention by committing atrocities without regard to human rights."

The speech was monitored in Lima on local radio, which carried it live in simultaneous translation. Early on Sunday suspected

Maosist Shining Path rebels tossed a package bomb at an electric company's offices in Lima, causing minor damage but no injuries, police said.

The Shining Path is larger than the Cuban-inspired MRTA and responsible for more of violence during Peru's 16 years of guerrilla wars. But it was overshadowed by the MRTA after the smaller group's spectacular seizure of the Japanese embassy's mansion 55 days ago.

In Lima the government and MRTA rebels led by Nestor Cerna Cerpa continued to put the final touches on preparations for the resumption of preliminary face-to-face talks broken off Dec. 28.

On Sunday Mr. Fujimori announced government negotiator and Peru's Education Minister Domingo Palermio will meet with Mr. Cerpa's number two Rolfo Rojas, known by his nom de guerre "El Arabe" — the Arab.

King and Saddam exchange greetings

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein's telephone call to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Saturday to congratulate the Iraqi leader on the occasion of 'Eid Al Fitr was a "natural" step in recent developments in Jordanian-Iraqi relations following the renewal of two key economic accords between the two countries, informed sources said Monday.

The King, who left on a visit to Europe on Saturday (see page 3) called President Saddam in the first direct contact between the two leaders since September 1990 and exchanged 'Eid Al Fitr greetings with the Iraqi leader, the official media of both countries reported.

The King's call came in response to a message of congratulations he received from the Iraqi president, the Iraqi News Agency said.

King Hussein wished President Saddam good health and progress and prosperity while the Iraqi president expressed his best wishes for the King and the people of Jordan.

Jordan and Iraq successfully negotiated and renewed the annual oil agreement and a trade protocol between them in January.

The oil agreement raised the value of free Iraqi oil supply to Jordan by \$50 million to \$300 million while the Kingdom agreed to pay nearly \$4 per barrel for the rest of the Iraqi oil supply. It also raised from \$220 million to \$255 million the amount of the trade protocol under which it supplies Jordanian products to Iraq.

The renewal of the accords followed several top-level visits to Jordan by Iraqi officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf, and by two Jordanian ministerial teams to Iraq.

The last time the King was in direct contact with President Saddam, according to a Jordanian white paper, was in September 1990, when he sent then Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to Baghdad with a message urging Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and resolve the Gulf crisis prompted by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August.

Since then, King Hussein has been critical of the policies of the Iraqi regime. Relations took a worse turn when Jordan offered shelter to two top Iraqi defectors, President Saddam's two sons-in-law in September 1995, and stepped up its criticism of the Iraqi regime.

The two defectors returned to Iraq in February 1996, but were killed, along with several other family members, in an attack that the Iraqi media said was carried out by their clan members.

Despite the political differences, Jordan and Iraq maintained strong economic links as reflected in the renewal of the oil agreement and trade protocol, and the King's direct call to President Saddam this week took the improvement in relations a step further.

Demirel, army warn Turkey's Islamists

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's powerful military has joined the president in warning the Islamic-led government against moving away from the country's secular system.

"Those trying to politicise religion are committing both a sin and a crime," Hurriyet newspaper quoted President Suleyman Demirel as saying. Mr. Demirel's remarks came at the start of a three-day holiday marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Chief of Staff Ismail Hakki Karadavi also seized the occasion to issue a reminder that the military considers itself the protector of secularism.

"The Turkish armed forces are determined to take on any duty aimed at the protection of the secular and democratic Turkish Republic," General Karadavi said.

Among his recent moves to make secular society more accommodating for the overwhelmingly Muslim populace, the ruling Islamic Welfare Party has rearranged office hours to fit fasting hours, announced plans for a mosque in Istanbul's main square and proposed allowing female civil servants to wear Islamic-style head coverings.

Further irking secular proponents was a call recently by the mayor of Sincan, a welfare-governed small town 40 kilometres outside Ankara, for strict Islamic rule.

The military, which has toppled governments three times in the last four decades, sent tanks rolling through the main streets three days later as a show of force.

Welfare's joining a centre-right, secular coalition in July as the senior partner marked the first time that an Islamic-inspired party was part of government in Turkey's modern history, marked by strict secularism since 1923.

"Do not misunderstand my impartiality as a president," Mr. Demirel said. "I am bound according to the promise I made... to the principles of our secular republic."

Meanwhile, Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, his recent populist trial balloons showing every sign of blowing up in his face, has toned down his rhetoric and drawn closer to his secularist coalition partner.

Mr. Erbakan has struck a conciliatory note, free of the recent Islamist rhetoric that had so alarmed his secularist critics in the army and the opposition parties.

"The adoption of the secular state which has been a turning point in the rise of the republic on new foundations has enabled the reconciliation of religious freedom in our country with a pluralist, political democracy," he said last week to mark the founding of Turkey's secular system.

A message to the nation on Sunday, celebrating the end of Ramadan, also praised Turkey's pluralist democracy.

Even those sympathetic to Mr. Erbakan have acknowledged that his bid launched during the fasting month to instil elements of his Islamist just order campaign on secular Turkey was ill-timed, at best.

"What has happened is the last 10 days?" asked the moderate Islamist daily Zaman. "The answer is simple: Erbakan did not understand the dimension of things he spread in public."

The most likely result of this miscalculation, say analysts and commentators, is a change of tactics to eschew Islamist populism and ensure welfare's grip on power, in order to establish deep party roots within the big state apparatus.

That means restoring ties to his secularist coalition partner Tansu Ciller, whose True Path Party has been upset by Mr. Erbakan's recent efforts to satisfy his own radical grassroots.

"What is important today for Welfare are not symbolic gestures, like limiting civil servants' hours during Ramadan or wearing of the Islamic headscarf," said political analyst Bilal Cerin.



'EID IN CAIRO: Cotton candy and juice vendors, banned from entering the zoo, sell their merchandise from behind the fence during the second day of the 'Eid Al Fitr feast. The feast marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan and is celebrated in Egypt and most other Muslim countries with feasting, exchanging of gifts and family outings (Reuters photo)

Conservatives and moderates share seats in Iran by-elections

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's religious conservatives and a coalition of Islamic moderates and left-wingers shared the seats decided in parliamentary by-elections, the interior ministry announced Monday.

The official results showed that each camp won six seats but another 10 up for grabs in Friday's elections produced no clear winners and are to be contested in run-offs.

The 22 seats were contested in 15 districts — all outside Tehran — where the results of full parliamentary elections last March and April were cancelled because of alleged irregularities.

Three women were among the winners, adding to the 10 seats in the 270-member parliament already held by women.

Among them was moderate Nayerreh Akhavan-Bitaraf, who finally won a seat in Esfahan after having emerged the victor in April only for the result to be cancelled because of polling irregularities.

The other women victors were Zahra Pichgahi-Fard, also from Esfahan and backed by the conservatives, and Elahbeh Rastgu from the southwestern region of

Malayer.

In the southern town of Rafsanjan, birthplace of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Hossein Hashemian, a cousin of the president and a left-winger, lost to conservative Mohammad Hosseini.

A total of 181 candidates ran in the by-elections, for which the turn-out was fairly low, according to reports from polling stations across the Islamic republic.

The conservatives led by Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri already hold a majority in parliament.

The speaker is backed by the ruling Shiite Muslim clergy to replace Mr. Rafsanjani in presidential elections expected to be held in July. Mr. Rafsanjani is in his second term and can run a third time, under the constitution.

The by-elections coincided with the annual "Jerusalem Day," which Iran marks with anti-us protests on the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Three fall from Giza pyramid

CAIRO (AFP) — Three Egyptian students on holiday trying to scale the Cheops Pyramid in Giza fell and suffered severe head injuries, the newspaper Al-Ahram reported Monday. Al-Ahram said the students were in a coma from their injuries. Climbing the pyramid south of Cairo was a favourite sport of visitors and Egyptians alike until the turn of the century, since when it has been banned to prevent damage and accidents. Cheops, largest of the three Giza Pyramids, is 137 metres high.

Police boost scandal probe team ahead of Netanyahu interrogation

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police have assigned more officers to an investigation of alleged high-level criminal tampering over the abortive appointment last month of an attorney-general, officials said Monday.

The decision to put more investigators on the case came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office confirmed he would be questioned next week about the Jan. 10 appointment of Roni Bar-On as Israel's top judicial official.

"The prime minister has expressed his readiness to present testimony concerning the investigation relating to the appointment of the attorney-general," his spokesman said in a statement.

Commander Sando Mazor, head of the police investigations unit, said the team probing the Bar-On affair was being increased as of Monday from six to eight members due to the widening scope of the investigation.

France rejects role if Israel quits Lebanon without Golan deal

TEL AVIV (AFP) — France's ambassador to Israel on Monday refused suggestions that his country could station troops as a buffer force in South Lebanon in case of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the zone.

Jean-Noel de Lacoste said a unilateral Israeli pullout from the buffer zone it occupies in southern Lebanon would not succeed without a parallel pullback from the Golan Heights which Israel seized from Syria in 1967.

"If there is no deal with Syria, I don't see us intervening to separate" Israeli forces and Hizbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon, Mr. De Lacoste said in a letter to the editor of the Jerusalem Post newspaper.

He was responding to an article published last week in the English-language newspaper concerning calls by some politicians for France to back a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon by stationing a buffer force in the area to prevent cross-border attacks by guerrillas.

The idea was put forward by Labour Party Deputy Yossi Beilin, who together with members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party has launched a public debate on Israel's policy in Lebanon.

The issue has come to the fore following a series of military setbacks linked to the Lebanon conflict, notably the deaths of 73

soldiers when two helicopters taking them to the combat zone collided last week.

Some politicians have also turned to the Lebanon pullout proposal given the lack of progress in efforts to resume peace talks with Syria.

The Syrian peace track has been frozen by Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to commit himself in principle to a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Mr. De Lacoste said it would be futile for Israel to hope that, in the absence of peace with Syria which is the main power-broker in Lebanon, it could unilaterally seek a settlement of the Lebanese conflict.

"We don't believe anything that is unilateral can be successful," Mr. De Lacoste told the newspaper in an interview accompanying his letter.

"I don't think a withdrawal from Lebanon would be accepted by Syria. I personally don't see 'Lebanon first' as a way out."

"There is no other option for Israel than a negotiated deal with Syria, and the sooner the better," he said.

Mr. De Lacoste also denied suggestions that a visit to Israel beginning Tuesday by French Defence Minister Charles Millon could deal with the idea of a French deployment in Lebanon.

Mr. Millon is scheduled to hold talks on boosting military cooperation between Israel and France.

Iraq shows off counter-intelligence prowess in television series

BAGHDAD (AFP) — State-run television has been singing the praises of the Iraqi secret service with a series on how it foiled an alleged Israeli attempt to recruit an Iraqi engineer to spy on behalf of the Jewish state.

The show, "The Men of the Shadows," was based on counter-intelligence documents about the case of Hassan Babili, an Iraqi Military Industrial Organisation (MIO) engineer whom the Mossad allegedly tried to recruit.

After being approached by Israeli agents in 1989, the engineer informed Iraqi counter-intelligence, which purportedly had him con-

vey false information on Iraq's military capability to the Israelis.

The 24-part series, which began a month ago and concluded this week, was filmed in Baghdad and in Paris, where Hassan Babili had been sent by the MIO for training in an unspecified field.

The Mossad allegedly approached the engineer in France, through a beautiful woman with whom he fell in love, but not deeply enough that he would betray his country.

Iraqi newspapers criticised the romantic episode for its explicitness, but director Salah Karam defended the portrayal in an

interview with the weekly newspaper Alef-Ba.

"That's how the Mossad wanted to compromise the engineer," he said.

The series was highly complimentary of the Iraqi secret services' overall efficiency and how well informed they were on Mossad activities in Iraq, said to be headed by a British businessman identified only as "Mister Brown."

"We expect information from Tel Aviv," a secret service official said in one episode, indicating that Baghdad had its own intelligence resources at work in Israel.

The series began at the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan, during which Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had offered to pardon any spies who turned themselves over to the authorities.

The presidential amnesty offer came after an announcement in January that the authorities had dismantled a Mossad spy network. Two Iraqi soldiers and a Iraqi Kurdish merchant face the death sentence in connection with the case.

Jamal Majid Nader, a 40-year-old businessman, said he recruited Riyadh Kamal Rashid, a former colonel in the Iraqi army and his brother Ehsan, a soldier, to

spy for the Jewish state. They confessed on state-run television on Jan. 8.

On Dec. 20 the Iraqi authorities said they had unmasked a spy network working for the United States and broadcast the confessions of four accused spies. Washington dismissed the claim as a "tired propaganda ploy."

The accused U.S. spies said they sent intelligence on military installations in Iraq to contacts in the Kurdish-controlled northern part of the country, where the United States had set up a safe-haven for the Kurds.

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PROGRAMME TWO

13:05Cartoon
14:30Comedy — Tilt
16:00 Movie — "A Tribute to the Boy"
17:30I Love Lucy
18:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Murphy Brown
20:00America's Funniest Videos
20:30 Best Seller — Seduced by Madness (Pt. 2 of 2)
22:00News in English
22:25 Feature Film: "Empire of the Sun"
23:29Boston Pops

PRAYER TIMES

05:00Fajr
06:18(Sunrise) Duha
11:50Dhuhr
14:54Asr
17:21Maghreb
18:40Isha

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Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology.

Unstable weather conditions
will prevail with skies cloudy to
partly cloudy. Scattered showers
are expected and winds south-
easterly moderate. In Aqaba,
winds will be northerly moder-
ate and seas calm.

Amman02/10

Aqaba07/18

Deserts1/13

Jordan Valley07/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10, Aqaba 17 Humid-
ity readings: Amman 55 per
cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL

TELEPHONE

NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hanna Mansour750197

Dr. Afif Shukri898863

Dr. Khalil Ramadan774397

Dr. Ousama Al Hussaini 847289

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asema pharmacy637053

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Nairoukh pharmacy636772

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu381484

Al Quds pharmacy1

ZARQA:

Dr. Rafeb Atallah994434

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Dept661111

Civil Defence Immediate Res-
cue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111,
637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department
.....630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Com-
plaints897467

Amman Municipality Com-
plaints787111

Telephone Information (direc-
tory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone
Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs
661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority
.....815615

Electric Power Company
636381

RJ Flight Information
0853200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-
53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre
813813/32

Khalidi Maternity644281/6

Akileh Maternity643441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity
.....(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15Sanaa (RJ)

07:25Damascus (RJ)

09:25Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)

10:05Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:05Beirut (RJ)

10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

10:35Toussor (Tunisia) (add)

(RJ)

15:55London (RJ)

16:20Cairo (RJ)

16:35Frankfurt (RJ)

17:15Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

07:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

05:05London (KJ)

13:30Kiev (6U)

14:05Munich (YP)

16:30Rome (AZ)

18:15Dubai, Damascus (EK)

20:30Cairo (MS)

22:50Tel Aviv (LY)

23:40Amsterdam (KL)

23:59Aden (TY)

00:55Bucharest (RO)

07:45Beirut (ME)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20Aqaba (RW)

18:55Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:20Beirut (RJ)

08:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

10:50Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)

11:05Amsterdam, Montreal,
Toronto (RJ)

12:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)

12:10Paris (RJ)

12:15London (RJ)

12:15Cairo (RJ)

12:40Brussels (RJ)

20:20Lamaca (RJ)

20:30Jeddah (RJ)

20:40Damascus (RJ)

21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

22:00Kuala Lumpur, Singapore
(RJ)

01:40Jeddah (add) (RJ)

04:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

07:30London (KJ)

07:35London (BA)

14:30Kiev (6U)

15:45Munich (YP)

18:15Dubai (EK)

18:40Rome (AZ)

Algeria counts its dead as Ramadan draws to close

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria counted its dead Monday following a bloody weekend in which at least 28 people, including a couple and their baby, were slaughtered by extremists as the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan drew to a close.

Media reports said the killings took place in various parts of the country and in one incident appeared to involve a scuffling of scores between two rival Islamist parties.

The death toll added to an already long list of victims, mostly civilians, who have been killed since the start of Ramadan on Jan. 10 in an unprecedented spiral of violence.

Muslim extremists vying to topple the military-backed government had pledged to step up their campaign of violence during

haram Ramadan, which celebrates the revelation of the Koran to the Prophet Mohammed.

And they kept to their word, slaughtering more than 300 civilians, sometimes entire families singled out and hacked to death.

The real figure could be much higher, however, because it does not include fundamentalists or members of the security forces killed in frequent clashes.

Newspapers said that in one incident this weekend, gunmen passing themselves off as police massacred 14 people — belonging to two families — in Eucalyptus, a neighbourhood on the southeastern limits of the capital Algiers.

On Friday, the eve of Eid al-Fitr, the feast that marks the end of Ramadan, a former football player, Mo-

hammad Madani, was murdered in Kouba, one of the capital's eastern suburbs.

The following day armed attackers killed a couple and their baby in the Beau Frasier district above Algiers.

The other victims were killed in various other incidents including one in which gunmen opened fire on worshippers leaving a mosque in Meftah, 25 kilometres southeast of Algiers. Two people were killed and seven wounded.

Newspapers also reported that six people were killed Sunday in the village of Oued Senane, located in the Medea region 100 kilometres south of Algiers, and two others in the nearby village of Kouali.

In Oued Senane, the assailants, said to belong to the radical Armed Islamic Group, reportedly also

slaughtered 60 heads of cattle owned by the victims who backed the rival Islamic Salvation Army.

The bloodshed so far this year has been the worst since the extremists began a terror campaign five years ago following the cancellation of elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

According to Western estimates, more than 50,000 people have been killed.

Algiers saw the worst of the violence over the past month with a series of bombings, set off without warning and designed to cause maximum damage.

Although the capital was relatively quiet over the past few days, parking was strictly regulated to prevent new car bomb attacks.



Ecuador's Vice-President Rosalia Arteaga (left), appointed interim president amidst the political crisis sparked by the ouster of Abdala Bucaram, talks briefly with Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Páez Mucay Sunday during a ceremony in the presidential palace in which she received her appointment. Mrs. Arteaga will be in office for a few days until Congress passes new legislation to allow it to reappoint its leader, Fabian Alarcon as president (Reuter photo)

2 more die in Albanian rioting

VLORE, Albania (Agencies) — Two demonstrators died Monday in street clashes with riot police in the southern Albanian port of Vlore, one of a bullet wound, the other of a heart attack, hospital staff said.

The casualties brought to three the number of dead in two days of clashes pitting anti-government protesters against police.

A duty nurse at Vlore Hospital said a 30-year-old demonstrator had suffered a bullet wound extending from the shoulder to the spine and died after an operation and large blood transfusions. The second victim, a man of 51, died of heart failure before reaching hospital.

A total of 26 people remained in hospital with various injuries. Fifty more had been released after treatment.

Ambulances raced through the town after a morning of pitched battles in which demonstrators cornered policemen and forced them to retreat into surrounding hills. They later advanced to the police station and erected street barricades.

One man died in the first clashes which erupted Sunday evening, when protesters threw stones at the police station and police fired back into the air. Officials said he died of a heart attack, demonstrators blamed the police for his death.

It was by far the worst violence in Albania since protesters took to the streets to accuse the government of collusion in the collapse of Pyramid investment schemes that had robbed many Albanians of their savings.

Shots rang out and demonstrators and police threw rocks and stones at each other as some 10,000 people marched through the streets of Vlore to protest the collapse of a bogus savings scheme last Tuesday, a witness said.

"There are injured from both sides. The hospital is full," a nurse at the Vlore Hospital, who declined to give his name, told AFP.

Despite the violence, which has now left more than 150 people injured in the past two days, thousands of people continued their rally into Monday afternoon, gathering outside the police station and trying to break into the building where several dozen officers were barricaded.

Monday's protest was the sixth straight day of anti-government rallies in Vlore. The violence in the town Sunday and Monday amounts to the worst unrest in Albania

since protests erupted last month.

Trouble flared early in the town Monday, when between 300 and 400 demonstrators clashed with police. Stones were thrown at police who withdrew into the centre of the town as the crowd chanted "we want our money," and "down with the government."

Some 50 police officers were forced by the crowds to remove their uniforms, which were subsequently set ablaze, witnesses said.

Albanian President Sali Berisha invited protesters in Vlore to hold talks with the government to stop the volatile situation from exploding.

However, on Monday the government, blaming the "extreme left" for stirring up trouble called on residents in Vlore "to distance themselves from these illegal protests."

In a statement released Monday, the government added that the police were "decided and ready to respond in accordance with the law, to all acts of terrorism."

Albania has been gripped by unrest for the past month since the shaky investment schemes started imploding. Tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets of towns across the country to vent their anger at losing their life savings.

The opposition Socialist Party, a revamped group of one-time Communists who ruled this impoverished East European country for almost 50 years, says the government is to blame for the spectacular financial collapses in Albania and called for early elections.

It has also called for all those who lost money in the Pyramid schemes to continue their protests until the state reimburses them.

The government has pledged to try and make good the losses of some of the hardest-hit investors, but has denied responsibility in the investment scams.

In Tirana Saturday, police intervened to break up demonstrations, clubbing protesters, politicians and journalists alike and hauling in opposition leaders for questioning.

Mr. Berisha ordered an enquiry into the alleged police violence, saying that the use of force was "unacceptable against politicians and journalists."

He also condemned violence against the security forces, and state and public property.

Yeltsin welcomes cooperation with new Chechen leader

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin, who is sending his security council chief to the inauguration of Chechen President-Elect Aslan Maskhadov, is pressing on with cooperation plans despite the republic's outspoken claims to sovereignty.

In a Kremlin statement released Monday Mr. Yeltsin said "the federal ministries and departments must cooperate with the newly-elected (Chechen) institutions to discuss the concrete and immediate measures that need to be taken."

In order to do this it is necessary to "make sure that pensions and social funds are paid and that social, medical and teaching establishments are running

again," the statement said.

Mr. Maskhadov, who was a clear winner in Chechnya's landmark Jan. 27 presidential elections with just under 60 per cent of the vote, will be sworn in Wednesday.

The head of Russia's Security Council, Ivan Rybkin, will attend the inauguration. Mr. Rybkin was appointed Russia's mediator in Chechnya after Mr. Yeltsin sacked his predecessor Alexander Lebed from the post last year.

Mr. Maskhadov's election was welcomed by Mr. Yeltsin last month, who said it provided "a serious chance for the centre and the new Chechen leadership to continue negotiations and arrive at mutually acceptable decisions on Chechnya's status."

Chechnya's new leader

meanwhile wasted no time in declaring that Chechnya "is an independent state which has declared sovereignty. Now it remains that the independence be recognised by all countries, including Russia."

So far no country has recognised Chechnya as an independent state. Under an August 1996 peace treaty which ended the Chechens' 21-month war of independence with Russia, the two sides gave themselves five years to work out their mutual relations and a statute for the tiny republic.

Last week Moscow warned that if foreign dignitaries were to attend Mr. Maskhadov's swearing in, this would be considered "unfriendly towards Russia."

Tajik rebel leader returns to negotiate in hostage crisis

DUSHANBE (R) — A Tajik rebel leader returned home from Afghanistan Monday to help negotiate the release of hostages held by his fighters and a government spokesman said this could help break a week-old deadlock.

This is a serious advance towards ending the problem of the hostages," Zafar Saidov told Reuters in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, referring to the return of Rizvon Sadirov.

But there was no news on the outcome of

any talks in the former Soviet republic, where the government faces tough opposition from armed groups of Islamic fighters.

Mr. Sadirov's brother Bakhtom is holding 15 captives in the town of Obirgam, in a mountainous area some 80 kilometres east of the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

The first hostages were seized last Tuesday and the rebels later captured a carload of Russian reporters and four U.N. workers.

Ecuador's Arteaga takes over as crisis ebbs

QUITO (R) — Ecuador's Vice-President Rosalia Arteaga Sunday was appointed head of a caretaker government that brought an end to the political crisis sparked by the ouster of flamboyant leader Abdala Bucaram.

Mr. Bucaram, dubbed "el loco" — madman — for his sometimes bizarre behaviour, stepped down early Sunday just six months after he won office, driven out by a paralysing strike and a revolt in the congress.

A smiling Arteaga, a 40-year-old lawyer and former education minister, gave a brief speech at the ornate Carondelet Presidential Palace, saying Ecuador "fortunately found a constitutional solution" to a crisis that had put it "on the edge of the abyss."

Acknowledging she would head a brief transitional government, she later told a news conference that "order has been restored... The country is not paralysed... We can guarantee security."

Legislators said Congress would meet Tuesday to pass legislation allowing it to reappoint its leader, Fabian Alarcon, as president.

With Mrs. Arteaga returning to the vice-presidency, Mr. Alarcon, 50, would in turn serve as interim head of state until Aug. 10, 1998, then hand over power to a new president chosen in general elections to be held in May or June next year, a vote the ousted Mr. Bucaram vowed to play a role in.

Mrs. Arteaga's appointment resulted from late-night talks between legislators and military leaders who, political sources said, were reluctant to back any deal that had no legal standing.

In a joint statement Sunday, the armed forces and National Police reiterated "unyielding democratic vocation and absolute respect for the constitution."

Mr. Alarcon was initially voted in as president by Congress Thursday after two days of demonstrations protesting Mr. Bucaram's alleged incompetence.

With a constitution vague on the issue of succession, three people, Mr. Bucaram, Mrs. Arteaga and Mr. Alarcon, all claimed the presidency, and leading legislators turned to the armed forces as the final arbiter.

Mr. Bucaram left the capital late Friday and finally gave up his fight to save his presidency Sunday, saying a military-backed "congressional coup" left him without power to rule.

He remained defiant, however, and said he was not dead politically in the Andean nation of 12 million people.

Analysts agreed with his assessment.

"Bucaram is not finished, he'll continue to play an important role in politics. In the next elections people will seek to elect an outsider and that could well be Mr. Bucaram again," said Jaime Duran, head of polling and consulting firm Informa Confidencial.

In a rambling interview on national television granted at his home in the Pacific coast city of Guayaquil, Mr. Bucaram vowed to make a political comeback, saying: "I'm going to be a candidate for the presidency in the next elections."

And the man who campaigned last year as a champion of the poor yet enraged his impoverished nation with economic belt-tightening measures said Ecuadorians would bitterly regret his dismissal.

"If you think I'm crazy today just wait to see what kind of craziness is coming in the future," he said.



Indian poll officials open a ballot box as they prepare for vote counting for the Punjab state assembly elections in Ludhiana city Sunday. The pro-Sikh Akali Dal party won the polls in northern Indian state (Reuter photo)

Sikhs ride to sweeping victory in India's Punjab

CHANDIGARH, India (R) — A Sikh party was poised Monday to rule India's Punjab state for the next five years after a landslide victory in the farming region's first peaceful elections in nearly two decades.

The Akali Dal, led by former Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal, and its ally the rightwing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won an overwhelming four-fifths of the 117 seats in the state legislature.

"The Hindus dominate the cities. The BJP is their major mouthpiece. Sikhs dominate the countryside. The combination is formidable," said Ashis Nandy, an analyst at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi.

It was a significant win for the Sikh party, which won a dominant 74 seats after boycotting the last Punjab elections in 1992. The state's ruling Congress Party was reduced to a humiliating also-ran with only 14 seats.

"This is a sweeping victory, a good result from unprecedented peaceful polls," Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer Brajendra Singh told Reuters.

"I would like to concede

victory to the Akali Dal," Congress General Secretary Gulam Nabi Azad told state-run Doordarshan Television. "We may have lost, but democracy has won."

Election officials noted that a strong 69 per cent of the state's 15 million voters had turned out for Friday's polls, in sharp contrast with 1992 when a scant 22 per cent voted in an election overshadowed by Sikh separatist violence.

"It is a historic win at a historic moment for Punjab. It signals an era of peace and prosperity," Akali Dal spokesman Kanwaljit Singh told Reuters.

A rival, pro-separatist faction of the Akali Dal won just one seat in Monday's final tally. Its leader, former police official turned militant Simranjit Singh Mann, was defeated.

State officials said the 69-year-old Badal was expected to take office as Punjab's chief minister later this week.

The rich farming region bordering Pakistan was roiled by years of guerrilla violence that peaked in June 1984 when the army attacked Sikhdom's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple, to flush out militants holed

up there.

Four months later then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two Sikh bodyguards and India's capital Delhi was rocked by anti-Sikh rioting.

Sikh-Hindu ties frayed as the militants pursued their goal of a separate Sikh homeland called Khalistan, but the revolt was put down by a harsh security crackdown. Nearly 20,000 people died in the violence.

Analysts said the Akali Dal's poll alliance with the BJP offered Sikhs and Hindus a chance to overcome the distrust.

"The Akalis never encouraged militancy. They were soft on the militants. The militancy was the handiwork of groups which were opposed to the Akalis," Mr. Nandy said.

Kanwaljit Singh, a former interior minister, underlined the new mood of reconciliation, saying the Akali Dal had shifted its focus from the welfare of the state's majority Sikhs to friendship with its minority Hindus.

"Hindus may be in a minority in Punjab, but we have realised that the state cannot progress without their total involvement in its governance," he said.

Five injured by World War II grenade in Berlin — firefighters

BERLIN (R) — Five children were injured here Sunday, two of them seriously, when a World War II grenade they were playing with exploded, a Berlin Fire Brigade spokesman said.

"The explosion was probably caused by a World War II hand grenade. The children were playing with it and it went off," spokesman Matthias Waligora told journalists at the scene.

Police and firefighters evacuated apartment buildings surrounding the yard where the children, aged 10 to 13, were playing,

and the injured were taken to hospital, Mr. Waligora said.

"I heard the explosion and came running out. I saw the children in the yard," said Christian Schroeder, 16, who lives nearby. He and a friend ran to help the children and called the emergency services.

"The explosion gave them such a shock that they were running about in the yard. We had to catch them and calm them down," he said. "Two of them were lying in the yard totally covered in blood. It took five to 10

minutes for the ambulance to come," Schroeder said.

Mr. Waligora said the two children who were seriously hurt had multiple cuts to the upper body from grenade fragments. It was not clear what injuries the other three had sustained.

Police said they wanted to bring in sniffer dogs to search the area in case there were any more grenades or explosives.

Unexploded World War II bombs are still occasionally found in Germany, often by construction workers.



Police inspect a body which another five were seriously injured. A suspect for the killing was charged in court

Schizophrener

with a knife. (R)

A man with a mental health problem was charged Monday with the killing of one of a group of people slain in a shooting in a family lodge in a mental health patient.

The man, identified as Stephen Anderson, was charged with the murder of a man in the lodge, which was a mental health patient.

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World News

Ecuador's Arteaga takes over as crisis ebbs

QUITO (R) — Ecuador's Vice-President Rosalvo Arteaga Sunday took over as president, ending a period of political crisis sparked by the ouster of President Lucio Gutiérrez.

Mr. Arteaga, 55, a former minister of the interior, had been acting president since the ouster of Mr. Gutiérrez on Jan. 25. He was sworn in Sunday afternoon.

A student Arteaga, 22, was killed in a shooting on Monday in the central town of Raurimu in New Zealand's central North Island. A suspect for the killings was found naked and unarmed in a farmland close to the scene of the slaying and was charged in court for one count of murder (Reuter photo).



Police inspect a body which lies on the front porch of the Raurimu Lodge Sunday, after six people were killed and another five were seriously wounded in a shotgun massacre in the town of Raurimu in New Zealand's central North Island. A suspect for the killings was found naked and unarmed in a farmland close to the scene of the slaying and was charged in court for one count of murder (Reuter photo)

Schizophrenic son shatters N. Zealand family

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand health authorities said Monday a man charged in the killing of one of six people slain in a weekend shotgun shooting rampage at a family lodge was a mental health patient.

Police arrested Stephen Anderson, 22, on Monday in the central North Island town of Raurimu. He was charged with the murder of a 60-year-old man and five other people.

The area was described by Prime Minister Jim Bolger as one of the most peaceful and idyllic in a beautiful country. The family, which lives in an exclusive street in Wellington, had planned a weekend outing for friends at their Raurimu lodge, built by Neville Anderson.

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After a brief Sunday court appearance, Stephen was remanded in prison for a psychiatric report. He will appear Wednesday in a Hamilton Court, where police say he will face more charges.

The family, which lives in an exclusive street in Wellington housing residences of ambassadors, had planned a weekend outing for friends at their Raurimu lodge, built by Neville Anderson.

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Serbian opposition rallies before parliament meets

BELGRADE (R) — Serbia's political opposition said it would keep up pressure Monday, rallying on the streets as parliament prepares to reinstate disputed election results.

When it assembles in extraordinary session Tuesday, parliament is expected to approve a bill reinstating opposition gains in municipal elections last November.

Even if it does so, thereby meeting the central demand of opponents of the authoritarian President Slobodan Milosevic, the daily demonstrations are expected to continue at least until the new law is officially gazetted in about 10 days time.

"We cannot believe those who stole (the municipal vote) until they officially fix the theft," opposition Democratic Party spokesman Slobodan Vukobratovic told Reuters. "That is, until all the mandates in all the municipalities where we won are verified."

Results of the Nov. 17 municipal poll were annulled by Mr. Milosevic's Socialist on grounds of "irregularities," prompting domestic protests and foreign criticism.

For weeks Mr. Milosevic ignored the rallies that routinely drew tens of thousands of people onto the streets. Then nine days ago he ordered paramilitary police to clear downtown Belgrade, and in repeated baton charges scores of people were injured.

Last Tuesday, apparently stung by the mounting international outcry, he said he was asking parliament to reinstate the opposition's election successes in 14 towns and cities, including Belgrade.

Already leaders of the three-party opposition Zajedno (Together) Coalition have expressed misgivings over Mr. Milosevic's appar-

ent climbdown, saying not all the municipal results are listed in the draft law. Zajedno co-leader Zoran Djindjic told Sunday's demonstrators: "In our opinion, Milosevic...has no intention of raising the white flag, but only of consolidating his strength and then trying to win back what he lost personally."

He said Mr. Milosevic intended to reduce the already limited powers of local councils by stripping them of their sources of revenue.

The opposition also wants free media and independent courts, and it seeks to restore the independence of Studio B, a Belgrade television station controlled by the state.

"He (Milosevic) can rest assured there will be hundreds of thousands in the streets again if he does not free it," Mr. Djindjic said. State-run Belgrade Radio, meanwhile, accused Zajed-

no leaders Sunday night of trying to topple the state.

"There is no doubt any more that for the last two-and-a-half months, the ring-leaders, that is, the leaders of the Zajedno Coalition have been striving intensively on the streets of Belgrade and several other towns in Serbia to bring down not only the current authorities, but also the state," the radio said.

The Yugoslav News Agency Tanjug also carried the report.

"Difficult months lie before us," Mr. Djindjic said. Monday's rallies began with more than 200 university professors and tutors demanding the resignation of the pro-Milosevic rector of Belgrade University.

Students were expected to mount their customary march through the Serbian capital later, with the Zajedno rally planned after dark in the city centre.

Sri Lanka seizes suspected rebel arms ship

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan Armed Forces seized a Cyprus-registered freighter suspected of smuggling arms for Tamil rebels and also sank a rebel boat off the northeastern coast, military officials said Monday.

The first seizure of a suspected arms-smuggling ship in a year occurred Sunday off rebel-held Mullaitivu and coincided with a big army offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are fighting for a minority Tamil homeland.

Air force Mi-24 helicopters fired on the freighter, identified as the Caribbean Queen, which was later escorted by navy fast-attack boats to the government-held port of Trincomalee, military officials in Trincomalee and Colombo said.

NATO steps up patrols in disputed Bosnian towns

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO said Sunday that Spanish peacekeeping troops had stepped up patrols in the Bosnian town of Mostar after a spate of explosions raised tensions between rival Muslim and Croat communities.

The NATO-led peace force said it ordered the move to try to discourage further violence which has accompanied political battles between Muslim and Croat leaders, a spokesman said.

"The Spanish are increasing the frequency of patrols to try and calm things down there," Major Tony White, a spokesman for the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) told Reuters.

International police monitors reported an explosion Saturday afternoon in a main square straddling a former front line. On Friday evening, a blast shattered windows in a Roman Catholic monastery in the Croat-held western sector.

ing troops, to arrest those responsible. The incidents in Mostar fall outside of SFOR's military mission to separate rival armies, NATO commanders say.

The source of the explosions, most of which occurred on the Croat-held western sector of Mostar, remains unknown. But international police officials suspect grenades may have been used in cases where the blasts caused no major material damage.

Croat media, under the strict control of Croat politicians, blamed Muslims in eastern Mostar for the incidents.

Local Muslim leaders appealed for calm and accused "extremists" of launching attacks to halt efforts at reunifying the town.

em town of Breko as a deadline approached for a decision to settle the future status of the area.

An American arbiter must deliver a ruling by Feb. 15 to determine who will control the strategic town, the subject of a long-running territorial dispute which nearly undermined a peace agreement reached in Nov. 1995.

An SFOR officer who asked not to be named said additional U.S. troops were deployed in Serb-held Breko as a deterrent to any possible violence in the days leading up to the deadline.

"We have made adjustments to our resources over the last month as a precautionary measure and to get a general assessment of the situation," the officer said.

Zaire opposition strike closes much of Kinshasa

KINSHASA (R) — An opposition strike called closed down much of Zaire's capital Kinshasa Monday, with the Central Bank open but many shops, businesses and government offices closed, witnesses said.

The main opposition of Sacred Union of the Radical Opposition (USOR) of Etienne Tshisekedi called the protest to demand the removal of Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo.

The opposition, which has called for negotiations with rebels in the east, attacked Mr. Kengo's conduct of the war with Tutsi-led rebels in the east and accused him of stalling on organising promised elections as a way of hanging on to power.

Soldiers in military vehicles patrolled potential flashpoints and civil guards

deployed at petrol stations which mostly stayed shut. In one residential district youths set fire to tyres but there was no early report of violence.

The radical opposition called a similar protest in 1995. It floundered with businesses and government offices working normally.

This time many private and public sector workers followed the call. The Central Bank and prime minister's offices operated but Kinshasa's business district — where June 30 Boulevard is usually blocked by traffic jams — was almost deserted.

Elsewhere, no newspapers appeared. Most drivers of taxis and mini-buses followed the call. The central market was closed but occasional vendors laid out their

wares on its outskirts.

There were no immediate details on the response to the strike call elsewhere in the sprawling central African nation.

There was no fresh word Monday on what was happening on the war front, where rebel forces have been pushing north, south and particularly west.

A senior Defence Ministry official acknowledged that the government counter-offensive, launched on Jan. 20, had failed to make major advances. He said the army planned to use planes and helicopter gunships to turn the tide against the rebels.

"The army will rely heavily on air strikes to defeat the rebels," he told Reuters. "The counter-offensive has been launched but it has not got into high gear."

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila said in his headquarters Sunday that his forces would target Kisangani, Zaire's third largest city and headquarters for the counter-offensive.

He said that the Tutsi-led rebels would not march on the village of Tingi Tingi where up to 130,000 frightened Rwandan Hutus have taken refuge, 200 kilometres south of Kisangani. U.N. refugee supreme Sadako Ogata, who visited the camp Saturday, welcomed the decision. She was speaking in Kenya.

Mrs. Ogata has expressed concern that rebel advances will further endanger up to 300,000 trapped Hutu refugees who fled Rwanda fearing reprisals after the 1994 genocide of minority Tutsis by hardline Hutus.

McDougal reportedly to testify against Clinton

NEW YORK (R) — James McDougal, U.S. President Bill Clinton's former partner in the failed Whitewater real estate venture, has changed his story in a bid to avoid jail and told prosecutors Mr. Clinton attended a meeting in which an illegal loan was discussed, the New Yorker Magazine said Sunday.

In his first media interview since agreeing to cooperate with Whitewater prosecutors, Mr. McDougal told New Yorker correspondent James Stewart that Mr. Clinton was present at a 1986 meeting in which an illegal \$300,000 loan to Mr. McDougal's then wife Susan was discussed with David Hale, a businessman who specialised in broker-

Mr. McDougal. Mr. Stewart said prosecutors would not be able to make a case against Mr. Clinton simply on the basis of Mr. McDougal's change in testimony but would need "further corroborating evidence — records, details, new witnesses — that Susan McDougal might lead them to."

He said that without her help "the inquiry into the president's possible involvement in illegal activity in Arkansas appears stymied."

The legal proceedings arose from the failure of the Madison Savings and Loan Association, which cost taxpayers an estimated \$65 million.

The Clintons entered into a partnership with the McDougals in the Whitewater real estate venture in 1978, when Mr. Clinton was governor of Arkansas. Although their investment lost money, questions have

arisen about whether funds for the project were siphoned from the Savings and Loan, which was also a McDougal holding.

At the McDougals' bank fraud and conspiracy trial last year Mr. Clinton denied in videotaped testimony that he ever attended any such meeting or put pressure on Mr. Hale, who testified that the president had pressured him and warned him not to speak about it.

James McDougal backed Mr. Clinton's account then, saying under oath at his trial that no such three-way meeting with Mr. Hale took place.

But after being found guilty and facing up to 84 years in jail, Mr. McDougal changed his story and went as far as to claim Mr. Clinton may have wanted to help his wife because he once had an affair with her, Mr. Stewart said. Susan McDougal called the accusation an outright lie.

Susan McDougal was found guilty of fraud and sentenced to two years in jail, a verdict she is appealing. But she was sent to jail for refusing to testify before the Whitewater grand jury.

She accused independent counsel Kenneth Starr of wanting her to perjure herself by implicating Mr. Clinton, whom she said did nothing wrong.

Although Susan McDougal called the Whitewater investigation a witchhunt and said Mr. Clinton was innocent of any wrongdoing in the case, her ex-husband suggested she might have another reason to protect the president, Mr. Stewart said.

He said that in his interview with Mr. McDougal, the former banker and Arkansas Democratic Party figure told of intercepting a telephone call between his wife and Mr. Clinton in 1982 in which they discussed intimate things.

Disgraced Yeltsin bodyguard chief wins parliament seat

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin's disgraced former chief bodyguard Alexander Korzhakov has secured a second political life by winning a seat in the Russian parliament, early election results showed Monday.

The by-election Sunday in the run-down industrial district of Tula south of Moscow attracted a strange cast of candidates including world chess champion Anatoly Karpov, an imprisoned body builder, and an ex-

model. According to preliminary results, Mr. Korzhakov came out on top with 26.32 per cent of the votes, beating local reformist Eduard Pashchenko who had 16.96 per cent, and Mr. Karpov who had 15.81 per cent.

The election was being held to fill the State Duma seat vacated by Alexander Lebed, the ex-general who gave up his position to enter the Kremlin last year for a short-lived term as national security adviser.

Mr. Korzhakov, a KGB general for 10 years was Mr. Yeltsin's shadow bodyguard and confidant. He was sacked in June last year after the first round of Mr. Yeltsin's presidential reelection amid a corruption scandal.

During his campaign, he made no concrete suggestions for helping Tula's economy, but organised free rock concerts and his supporters even handed out free vodka to war veterans.

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Border talks open roads

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at Erez (Beit Hanoun) crossing point Sunday appear to have consolidated the new spirit that was created by the breakthrough achieved on Hebron last month. The two leaders seem to have emerged from the meeting encouraged by their joint willingness to proceed full speed in the weeks and months ahead. It is indeed encouraging to hear that the remaining sticking issues related to the Hebron protocol, especially the kind that could not have been foreseen at the time of signing, are being turned over to joint committees for resolution.

The business-like atmosphere which has evolved between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) over the past six months promises swifter and more solid preparatory work for the thorny issues that await tackling by them. On top of these is of course the final-status negotiations. All intermediate issues, such as the projected second-stage withdrawals and the operations of the PNA's sea and airport authorities as well as the release of Palestinian prisoners, are indeed important; but, in the final analysis, they represent no more than confidence-building measures on the long and tortuous road to the final-status talks.

One has to feel upbeat everytime another hurdle is removed between Israel and the PNA since each new positive step would lend additional support for the last-stage negotiations and place them in proper context. But what seems to be most crucial factor in peace-making at the moment is the apparently growing desire on the part of both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Arafat to work closely together. The personal relations that have developed between them are distinctly different from those of the early days of the Likud-led government when Netanyahu was extremely reluctant to even consider shaking hands with his Palestinian counterpart, much less strike a deal with him.

The latest encounter between Netanyahu and Arafat has, by present-day standards, gone well and as such its results augur well for the future. Let us hope the trend continues and a new partnership is found to enable the two peoples to reach not just a settlement but also an historic reconciliation.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i criticised the Palestine National Authority for its mistreatment of detainees in its jails, citing the reported death of a young man who was said to have died of torture last week. Writing under the pen name Meem, the writer said that from time to time, Arab citizens in Jordan are appalled at hearing reports of people dying of torture in Palestinian jails, a practice that should immediately stop. If we condemn Israel for its inhuman treatment of Palestinians in its jails, expose to the outside world such practices and resort to world organisations to help stop torture in Israeli jails, how can we justify the Palestine National Authority's torture of their own kinsmen, asked the writer. The detained men in Palestinian jails have just been discharged from Israeli prisons, where they suffered a great deal for many years, and they are looking forward to the dawn of freedom, not added suffering, continued the writer. He said that torture of detainees is a crime that should stop and those responsible for torture must be held accountable for their actions.

A WRITER for Al Dustour tackled the issue of gas cylinders in light of the latest explosion at Tareq, near Amman, saying that such incidents have been recurring almost yearly. Mohammad Daoud expressed the view that the workers' handling of the cylinders and the absence of any precautionary measures are responsible for these tragic incidents which cause the death and injury of innocent people. Most of the workers handling the distribution of gas cylinders and storing the cylinders in warehouses are non-Jordanians and they obviously lack any knowledge of public safety measures; more often than not, they tend to drop the cylinders carelessly and they often are seen smoking near the highly explosive cylinders, noted the writer. He said that in order to avert further disasters, civil defence instructions on storing and handling these cylinders must be heeded and warehouses should not be used by guest workers as homes where they live and make fire for cooking or heating purposes. He suggested that the civil defence conduct regular spot checks to ensure that gas cylinder store owners abide by the safety regulations and take steps to protect human life and public property.

The View from Fourth Circle

Dr. Akaileh knows his politics and his history

By Rami G. Khouri

THE REPEATED calls in recent weeks by leading Jordanian Islamists such as Dr. Abdullah Akaileh and Bassam Umoush for the Islamic Action Front (IAF) to reassess its political effectiveness and tactics should come as no surprise, given the steady decline of the Islamists in recent years. In fact, the only surprise is that it took the Islamists so long to come to terms with their slow drift to the periphery of political power and to do something about it.

In this respect, the current soul-searching taking place among Islamists in Jordan, within Jordan's relatively open political system, may signal an important trend among Islamists throughout the region who must likewise come to grips with the glaring contradiction that defines most of them: they reflect powerful and widespread sentiments among people in their societies, but they are woefully unable to use their political power to deliver on their promises. In other words, Islamists working within pluralistic political systems in most of the Middle East, with the obvious but still untested exception of Turkey, run the risk of becoming merely social protest movements in perpetual opposition to more secular regimes. Dr. Akaileh obviously senses this cruel dilemma, given that he told a recent meeting of his party that the IAF in Jordan has been "active but not effective" since its establishment five years ago.

Two aspects of this situation merit attention, in my view — the specific, current dilemma of the Jordanian Islamists and the broad political/national role that Islam has played throughout its history. The two need to be appreciated together for an accurate reading of the confusing yet continuing promise-and-failure of political Islamism.

The specific challenge laid down by Akaileh, Umoush and other Jordanian Islamists reflects their feeling that the Islamic Action Front has not been able to translate its slogans into reality, especially its central slogan of Al Islam Huwa Al Hal (Islam is the Solution). They say, correctly, I believe, that they must go beyond their slogans and inflexible political stands and consider joining the government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti in order to play "a more effective role in the current governmental process."

It is noteworthy that Dr. Akaileh should be leading this reassessment from within the IAF, for he is one of the most experienced Islamists in Jordanian politics, and therefore among the more realistic of that group. A veteran politician from Tafleeh serving his third consecutive term in Parliament, Dr. Akaileh also served as minister of education in Mudar Badran's government in 1991. That government is remembered today both for its inclusion of five Islamist ministers and for their collective incompetence, mainly because the Islamists gave the impression of spending most of their time on symbolic issues — such as opposing alcohol consumption in Jordan, the wearing of sports shorts by ten-year-old schoolgirls and men hairdressers cutting women's hair.

Dr. Akaileh, by stressing peripheral issues such as schoolgirls in shorts at a time when the Jordanian society was caught in a severe economic and political squeeze immediately after the Gulf war, achieved the extraordinary feat of provoking ordinary Jordanian men and women to mobilise against him, by signing petitions and

launching spontaneous grassroots political movements. He has seen, therefore more than other Islamists, the haunting face of political failure, rejection and irrelevance; thus, he tries now to rally his co-Islamists so that their entire movement does not suffer the same ignominious fate that he and his cabinet colleagues suffered in 1991.

It is important to note precisely how Dr. Akaileh and friends are stating their case: they are not arguing against the social relevance, nationalist aptitude or political vigour of Islamist politics, rather they are primarily mourning the political ineffectiveness of the IAF. He has correctly laid down the challenge to his Islamist colleagues: either to persist in their sloganeering and refusal to politics based on a psychologically-based approach that has no impact on Jordanian realities; or, "effectively addressing the problems afflicting the people, such as low standards of living, poverty, unemployment and starvation."

"... Islamism is more of a political rather than a religious movement, that it is accountable to its temporal electorate as much as to its timeless spirituality, and that it has not done very well on either front in recent years and is in need of an overhaul."

He told a recent press interviewer — wrongly, I believe, confirming some Islamists' capacity to misread public sentiment in sweeps of decades at a time — that "people are no longer concerned with the liberation of Palestine. They are more focused on achieving more adequate standards of living."

The truth, I think, is that Jordanians care both for the well-being of themselves and other Arabs, and they understand that there is a link between the two. What this tells us about some leading Islamists, however, is fascinating: they seem to be awakening to the total dimensions of people's spiritual and temporal needs; they also seem to be awakening to their inability to respond to those needs, except merely with slogans and promises, and some are panicking slightly and swinging to political extremes designed to respond to people's needs.

In other words, some leading Islamists are learning from experience and maturing as politicians, which is probably a good thing for Jordan, for Islamism, for all religious politics, and for the Middle East as a whole. If the Jordanian Islamists can recognise their huge political shortcomings, make mid-stream adjustments and regroup to fight the 1997 parliamentary elections with more pragmatism and effectiveness, this should be welcomed by all Jordanians — for it would provide that credible political opposition that is so badly needed in the country and the region to counterbalance the monopoly of power in the hands of ruling political elites.

This brings up the second important aspect of Islamist politics in its moment of decline and reassessment in Jordan: the fact that Islam, since immediately after its birth in seventh century Arabia, has always and repeatedly played a direct, explicit and political role in the rebirth and renaissance of Middle Eastern societies. Islamist politics is not an unusual phenomenon, but rather one that is deeply rooted in historical experience — one that the respected American scholar of Islamism, R. Hrair Dekmejian, has called the "cyclical propensity" of religious movements to experience successive periods of quiescence and resurgence. He noted in his latest book, "Islam in Revolution, Fundamentalism in the Arab World," that "the present phase of Islamic resurgence can be viewed as conforming to the cyclical appearance of revivalist movements in times of crisis reaching back to the Prophet's era... contemporary Islamic revivalists view themselves as the direct successors and emulators of past leaders and movements of resurgence and renewal."

Indeed, the roots of today's populist, politicised Islam lie deep in Middle Eastern and Muslim history, and also in the many nationalist, anti-colonial and anti-Western struggles in the modern Middle East that relied on Islam for several different purposes: as a rallying cry to seek freedom from foreign subjugation, to forge entities from tribal alliances or to reform and revive their stagnant societies. Some such episodes include the reforms of the Umayyad Caliph Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, the philosophy of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in the mid-9th century, Ibn Taymiyyah's puritan conservatism in the early 14th century, Late Ottoman period revivalist movements such as the Mahdiyyah in Sudan, Wahabism in Saudi Arabia and the Sanusiyyah in Libya, modern nationalist movements such as Abdul Al Qadir in Algeria, and 20th century reformist Islamist movements led by Jamal Al Din Al Afghani, Mohammad Abdu, Rashid Rida, Hassan Banna and Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, Allal Al Fasi in Morocco, Abdul Aziz Al Thalabi in Tunisia, Abdul Hamid Ibn Badis in Algeria, and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran.

Therefore, the current spectacle of political Islam reconfiguring itself for effective political and national contestation, in Jordan and other parts of the Middle East, is neither novel nor particularly dangerous. It is a refreshing sign that the single most powerful mass political movement in the post-Nasserite modern Middle East — political Islamism — is coming to grips with three important realities that it has always tried to avoid and that most Western observers have also missed: that Islamism is more of a political rather than a religious movement, that it is accountable to its temporal electorate as much as to its timeless spirituality, and that it has not done very well on either front in recent years and is in need of an overhaul.

Jordan and Turkey are the two most interesting arenas today for the political revival of revivalist political Islam, because in both these countries the Islamists are generally allowed to play by the rules of the political game. The fact that Islamists are leading a government in Turkey that is signing new military cooperation agreement with Israel, and that Islamists are reconsidering joining the government in Jordan because they feel that they have been ineffective in opposition should prompt us to see these movements in a more realistic and less hysterical light.

Interests clash but civilisations can cooperate

By Walter C. Clemens Jr.

BOSTON — The 21st century will not see a unified global civilisation, we are told. Instead, the West will confront the rest — Islamic, Hindu, Japanese, Chinese, Orthodox Christian and other civilisations imbued with values very different from those of Western Christianity.

In this view, America's troubles with non-Western countries run much deeper than arms or trade imbalances. They are rooted in a clash of values that is unlikely to disappear. Other civilisations may modernise but will not Westernise. They may worship the Magna Carta but oppose the Magna Carta.

The bottom line: Americans should bolster trans-Atlantic unity. If Western countries do not stick together, they may hang separately. Westerners should try to understand other

civilisations but recognise the deep fault lines likely to persist.

These themes are hammered home in Samuel Huntington's new book "The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order." Director of Harvard University's Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Mr. Huntington commands respect. If his views are true, they should give direction to U.S. foreign policy. But if they are false or overblown, they should be avoided as a dangerous, possibly self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Bonian powder keg exemplifies Mr. Huntington's argument. It sits where two civilisations formed after Constantinian split the Roman Empire. Centuries later, Eastern Orthodox took in Serbia, while Western Christianity absorbed Croats. A third civilisation, Islam, entered when the Ottomans took Bosnia in the

15th century. Since then the three communities have known intervals of war and of peace. Conflicts were repressed by Marshal Tito, but the end of communism has permitted the clash of civilisations to resurface in the Balkans.

The good news is that Mr. Huntington probably exaggerates. Cultural influences may distort our perception and aggravate our feuds, but no major conflict of this century resulted from a clash of civilisations.

In 1914, Protestant Berlin aligned with Catholic Vienna and Muslim Istanbul. Orthodox Russia allied with Catholic France and largely Protestant Britain. Orthodox Serbia opposed Catholic Austria but fought Orthodox Bulgaria.

The aggressors in World War II (Italy, Germany, Japan) cooperated despite divergent her-

itages. Later, when Hitler attacked the USSR, Churchill did not ask whether Stalin was Orthodox or even Communist. London immediately proposed to Moscow to combine against a common foe.

The subsequent cold war had little to do with rival cultures. It was a struggle for hegemony — Soviet Russian Imperialism against the West, Moscow's camp at times included China and other non-Orthodox countries, while Washington's partners included many non-Western societies.

Most wars since 1945 have been waged by rivals from the same civilisation — Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Somalia, Iraq and Kuwait.

No civilisation is monolithic. Iraq's leaders claim to be Sunni, while Iran's are Shiite. In any case, they contest waterways far more than theology. Muslims as well as Israelis

claim to descend from Abraham. They fight for shrines but also for land and resources. Yitzhak Rabin was killed by another Israeli, and Yasser Arafat is threatened by other Palestinians.

All this means that there is still hope for enlightened self-interest. Riffs between civilisations play second or third fiddle to other factors in world affairs — individual vision and myopia, bureaucratic rhythms and ruts, generosity and greed, resource bounty and scarcity, United Nations clout and frailty. Now, as before, states cooperate or clash based on perceived interest.

Increasingly, interdependence and technology make it possible and useful to cooperate across cultural boundaries, even though individuals and groups may not see these realities. Cultures evolve. Recent

decades have seen democratic values take hold in Portugal, Spain, Japan, Taiwan and other countries far from the Protestant individualism that Mr. Huntington sees as the bedrock of Western ways. We need not and should not assume an inextinguishable conflict between "the West and the rest." We should turn a potential for conflict into a practice of mutual gain.

The writer, professor of political science at Boston University and an associate at the Harvard University Centre for Science and International Affairs, is author of "Can Russia Change?" and "Baltic Independence and Russian Empire." This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Albania — the sharp end of the pyramid

By Gwynne Dyer

I ONCE bet that I could get serious newspapers to publish an article starting with the phrase "intergalactic pirates." I won, of course. I just wrote: "If intergalactic pirates kidnapped the whole Albanian nation, nobody else would notice for at least a week."

Nature is imitating art again. The pirates have arrived, and their names, like Rrapush Xhaferi and Bashkim Driza, suggest an extra-terrestrial origin. But they look human enough, and instead of kidnapping the Albanians they have just stolen their savings.

The pirates are the men who run Albania's pyramid funds, and it was the collapse of three big ones that triggered the past week of rioting in Albania's cities (five towns have burned). There will be more hell to pay before it is over, because seven other funds are still operating. Together they have sucked in about half the cash circulating in the small Balkan nation.

Many Albanians put their entire savings into these scams. Some even sold their houses, farms and valuables to invest

more. The sums involved are a substantial chunk of Albania's gross national product, and there is no way that the investors can ever be repaid what they are owed. But how could this happen in any country where the people are sophisticated enough to wear clothes?

One reason it happened is that President Sali Berisha's cabinet colleagues and his Democratic Party were closely linked to the promoters of the schemes. Indeed, in last October's local elections Democratic Party candidates and the pyramid-fund bosses appeared on the same platforms, under the slogan "Everybody wins." But with pyramid funds, the great majority of investors lose.

Lotteries are a tax on stupidity, but at least there is a real prize, and every player has an equal chance. In a pyramid-scheme scam, it is a mathematical certainty that all but the earliest waves of investors will lose their shirts. The unrealistic, pally high interest rates are paid directly out of new investments, and the numbers of new investors needed to maintain

the payments exceed the entire population of most countries in only a year or two.

We knew this as a mathematical certainty, but never before has an entire nation demonstrated it. Yet Albanians are not stupid.

They have been living in a cave for almost half a century under the xenophobic Maoist dictatorship of the late Enver Hoxha. But earlier, during the centuries when the Ottoman Empire ruled most of the Balkans and the Middle East, they were one of the three minorities — Armenians, Jews and Albanians — whose role in commerce and administration far exceeded their mere numbers.

As Muslims, Albanians were also free to rise to the highest political and military levels. Under the Ottomans, there were Albanian grand viziers, prime ministers, generals — and one Albanian-born general, Mohammad Ali, even became the founder of the modern Egyptian state. So how did this clearly talented people get suckered en masse by such a transparently obvious rip-off?

Because they have been living in a cave for 50 years. Ghanaian market traders, Thai peasants, Turkish housewives, even Wall Street investment analysts: anybody with hands-on experience at dealing with money instinctively knows that pyramid schemes cannot really work as advertised. But Albanians did not have that experience. To a greater or lesser extent, almost everybody who lived in the old Communist block was a financial innocent.

There were entire countries without a single accountant. Even in Russia, sophisticated people with high-level jobs lived entirely in cash. They did not even have cheque-books. They were completely innocent about money, in the original meaning of the word "innocent" — i.e., ignorant. But being innocent, as anybody with a four-year old will tell you, does not preclude being greedy.

Pyramid schemes flourished all across Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism. There were several big ones in Russia, and a notorious Romanian scam called Caritas

took an estimated \$1 billion from 4 million Romanians. But nowhere else did over half the adult population put their savings into the pyramid schemes. Why Albania?

Sheer isolation was one factor. Under Enver Hoxha, Albanians had no contact even with the citizens of other Communist countries. The latter half of the 20th century happened without them and mostly without their knowledge, while they lived lives of grinding poverty in a virtually cashless "workers' paradise."

When the walls came down and the blinkers came off, they were overwhelmed by the desire to possess the material goods that other Europeans had, but they had no idea what to do to get the money to pay for them. It was a mysterious and magical process — and if promoters with obvious government backing told them pyramid funds were the way... well, why not?

The pyramid funds of Albania are the cultural equivalent of the "cargo cults" popular in Melanesia in the 1930s, when people performed magical rituals in order to induce the

delivery of European material goods (cargo). The Albanians are the last people in the world to be so innocent, except maybe for the North Koreans.

So what will happen now in Albania? President Sali Berisha is promising to pay back 70 per cent of people's original investments (that no interest) out of the assets seized from the three bankrupt pyramid funds. But there is not nearly enough money left for that, and other pyramid funds still operate unhindered.

Berisha's goal now is sheer survival, and his government is trying to portray the popular protests as a plot by the Socialist (ex-Communist) opposition. "The destruction of state and public buildings... the strategy of 'scorched earth'... all these features are a complete proof that the Albanian extreme left is led by a terrorist-Stalinist clan," said Foreign Minister Tritan Shehu.

Will it save them? Probably not, and they do not deserve it. Will Albanians get their money back? No. Is Albania now condemned to spend more years as the poorest country in Europe? Sadly, yes.

By Michael Dubbs

WASHINGTON — Korbel was almost 2 years old when her parents moved her out of their home in March 1945, less than two weeks after the Nazi occupation of Poland ended. She was a refugee, a displaced person, a child of war. She and her mother, Madeline, fled to America. Madeline, a Polish-born diplomat's daughter, had been a diplomat's wife. She had been a diplomat's wife. She had been a diplomat's wife.

Albright has spent much of her past life in the United States, but she has never forgotten her Polish roots. She has never forgotten her Polish roots. She has never forgotten her Polish roots.

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By Rami G. Khouri

Features

Jordan Times, Tuesday, February 11, 1997

'I have always thought of myself as a Czechoslovak Catholic' — Albright after information she was of Jewish extraction

By Michael Dobbs

WASHINGTON — Madeleine Korbelt Albright was almost 2 years old when her parents whisked her out of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, less than two weeks after the Nazi occupation, giving up their life as a prominent diplomatic family and saying goodbye to many relatives.

Eventually, she and her parents came to America, where Madeleine followed in her father's footsteps into a diplomatic career that culminated recently when President Bill Clinton made her the first woman to be secretary of state.

Mrs. Albright has spoken movingly of her past and of the importance that her family's experience with Nazis and later Communists has had on her political view.

But she says she was never aware of what happened to family members who stayed behind in Czechoslovakia. Research by The Washington Post shows that more than a dozen relatives, including three grandparents, were killed in the Holocaust.

In an interview last week, Mrs. Albright, 59, who was raised a Roman Catholic and is now an Episcopalian, said her father and mother never talked to her or her two siblings about the relatives' fate or their Jewish background.

She said she found the new information "fairly compelling" but wanted to conduct her own research into her family and its fate. "Obviously it is a very personal matter for my family and brother and sister and my children," she said.

"The only thing I have to go by is what my mother and father told me, how I was brought up," Mrs. Albright said. She said her parents said of her relatives only that they died "during the course of the war."

Mrs. Albright defended the choices her parents made and said she could not question their motivation. "I believe that my parents did wonderful things for us," she said.



Madeleine Albright — her ancestry 'in no way complicates her ability to encourage peace in the Middle East'

The new information was uncovered during research for an article for The Washington Post Magazine about Mrs. Albright's family's experience in the late 1930s and 1940s. The information is based on documents in German, Czech and Jewish archives, Auschwitz transportation lists and interviews with friends and family members in Europe.

Captured Nazi documents now in the possession of Holocaust researchers show that close relatives of Mrs. Albright's who remained behind in Czechoslovakia during World War II — including the grandparents, her uncle and aunt and a first cousin — died in Nazi concentration camps.

Mrs. Albright, who was born in Prague in 1937, spent the war years in London, returning with her family to Czechoslovakia in 1945 after its liberation from the Germans.

Her parents were granted political asylum in the United States in 1948 after a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia.

Mrs. Albright comes from a family of Czech Jews who owned a building materials business before World War II, according to interviews in the family's home village. Mrs. Albright's father probably embraced Roman Catholicism around the time of the war, according to Josef Marek, who worked closely with Mrs. Albright's father immediately after the war.

Like many other assimilated Czech Jews, Mrs. Albright's father, Josef Korbelt, considered himself a Czechoslovak patriot and rarely referred to his religious background. Under the racial laws introduced by the Nazis after the takeover of Czechoslovakia, however, a family like the Korbelt would have been considered 100 per cent Jewish.

"I have always thought

of myself as a Czechoslovak Catholic," Mrs. Albright said in the interview. "My parents were of the generation who thought they were the children of a free Czechoslovakia, the only democracy in Central Europe. This was their pride, and that is what I grew up with."

Mrs. Albright said she had received several letters with information about her family background since the 1989 collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia and particularly since 1993, when her name began appearing in the papers as the chief U.S. delegate to the United Nations. Some of the letters contained erroneous information, such as the claim that she was born in Belgrade.

In this context, Mrs. Albright had also received "the occasional letter which would say something about the fact that my family was of Jewish origin," she said. "This obviously has become more intense the more my name has been in the paper and in connection with my current job as secretary of state."

The question of Mrs. Albright's religious background was raised in December by Arab newspapers, which cited uncorroborated reports of her Jewish origins as a basis for attacking her nomination as secretary of state. Questioned about these reports, State Department officials said she had been raised a Roman Catholic and had converted to Episcopalianism after her marriage in 1959 to Joseph Medill Patterson Albright, scion of a wealthy newspaper family.

Some Albright relatives and family friends in what is now the Czech Republic said they had long known of her relatives' fate.

"My children know very well about every detail," said Dagmar Simova, Mrs. Albright's first cousin, who stayed behind in Czechoslovakia after the 1948 coup and has had only sporadic contact since then with the American branch of the family.

When Miss Simova learned in the summer of

1945 that her parents and sister — Mrs. Albright's aunt, uncle and cousin — had died in the Holocaust, Mrs. Albright was only 8 years old and was considered too young to be told, Miss Simova said.

Family members who died during the Holocaust included Mrs. Albright's two paternal grandparents, Amos and Olga Korbelt, according to documents made available by a Holocaust research centre supported by the Prague Jewish community. The documents and a family friend suggest that Mrs. Albright's maternal grandmother, Anna Spiegelova, was killed by the Nazis as well.

The records, which are based on transportation lists captured from the Nazis at the end of World War II, show that some of Mrs. Albright's relatives were killed in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. Others died of typhoid and malnutrition at a holding camp at Terezin, where Czech Jews were kept before being sent to Auschwitz.

In an unpublished, unfinished 11-page family narrative made available by Mrs. Albright, her mother made no reference to relatives who died in the Holocaust. In the memoir, written after Josef Korbelt's death in 1977, Mandula Korbelt tried to describe his "tumultuous life." The memoir ends abruptly in 1945, just before the Korbelt family returned to Prague from London.

The manuscript describes in detail how Mrs. Albright's parents succeeded in leaving Czechoslovakia in March 1939 with their nearly 2-year-old daughter, 10 days after the Nazi invasion. Mandula Korbelt recalled that her husband returned to Prague from England just two days before the invasion.

"With the help of some good friends and lots of luck and a little bribery, we managed to get the necessary Gestapo permission to leave the country," wrote Mandula Korbelt, who died in 1989.

Mrs. Albright's chances of surviving the Holocaust

had she and her parents stayed in Czechoslovakia would have been very slim. The German authorities insisted that registrars provide detailed records of everyone of Jewish descent.

Josef Korbelt's file at the Foreign Ministry contains a birth certificate issued in March 1941, describing him as "Jewish."

Of the 80,000 Czech Jews who were rounded up and sent to Terezin in 1941 and 1942, the survival rate was approximately 10 per cent. Most of the survivors were young men and women who were "selected" to perform various manual tasks at Auschwitz rather than being sent directly to the gas chambers.

While the subject of the Holocaust was evidently too painful for the Korbelt family to discuss with their children, they apparently did discuss the matter with friends in Yugoslavia, where Josef Korbelt served as a diplomat both before and after World War II. Brief references to the tragedy have appeared in the Yugoslav press, based on the reminiscences of a now-deceased Yugoslav journalist, Pavle Jankovic, who was very close to the Korbelt family.

'A fascinating story'

The White House said last week that President Bill Clinton was briefed on the discovery of Mrs. Albright's ancestry and said this in no way complicated her ability to encourage peace in the Middle East. Reuters reported from Washington.

The White House spokesman, Mike McCurry, said Mrs. Albright herself has briefed the president and Vice President Al Gore on the matter.

"The president said it was a fascinating story and encouraged Madeleine to find out more, to look into her family history," Mr. McCurry said.

"He thought it was fascinating."

International Herald Tribune

Randa Habib's corner

'No point in praising without freedom to blame'

THEY HAVE blown the first candle since they came to power. So it is time for some reassessment and self-criticism. Initially, they had come full of life, hope and promises. They talked of a white revolution, open-bridge policies, accelerating the democratisation process and improving the economic situation. And indeed, they delivered. At least this is what we have been reading and hearing. Some said this government was different from previous ones which were "without colour or taste." Of course we do not remember these same people's remarks back then. But who is checking?

Others described the present formation as the most dynamic team ever. Some praised the decisions it took regarding the economy, even those unpopular, as they were undertaken for the best of the country and for the success of a badly-needed restructuring programme.

When you come to think about it, you must realise that we have been, in fact, ruled by magicians. Because to be able to do all that in one year is a feat close to a miracle. Seriously, what puzzles me, is the type of praise that we hear sometimes. Is it credible or just a translation of some people's personal good tied with members of the government?

The same goes for harsh criticism. One wonders whether the comments are based on genuine assessment or just driven by personal vendetta.

Maybe this government deserves indeed to be commended. But we want to make sure that comments, whether positive or negative, are really based on facts rather than whims.

A sentence I once read from Beaumarchais' works, the great French writer of the 18th century, keeps coming back to me. He wrote: "Sans la liberté de blâmer il n'est point d'éloge flatteur." Which means: With no freedom to blame, there is no point in flattering praise.

Sydney builds for Olympic 2000 deadline

SYDNEY (R) — Olympics fever is breaking out in Sydney's property market as builders work frantically to get projects ready in time for the 2000 games.

"Cranes have sprouted over the Sydney skyline over the past six months as construction of hotels, offices and high-rise residential apartments surges and with more multi-million projects still on the drawing boards."

"I think the Olympics is giving confidence to the property market," said Alastair Palmer, research manager at property management group Richard Ellis.

However, the games are not seen as the main reason for the rush in construction.

"I don't think the Olympics is driving a lot of the development but it is driving the timetable, because people are saying 'right if we are going to do it, let's do it before the year 2000'," Palmer said.

Tourism, lifestyle changes boost city property construction.

Australia's Australian dollars (A\$)14 billion (\$10.8 billion) tourism market demands more hotel construction, property analysts said.

"There are roughly A\$1.0 billion of hotel projects in Sydney on the drawing board or under way," said Brian Wawn, director of property publishers Burwood Publishing.

"Four years ago in Sydney we were scratching to find a hotel project," Mr. Wawn told Reuters.

Lifestyle changes are also underpinning a big demand for city residential accommodation, said Angela Borrelli, marketing manager at property developer Mirvac Ltd.

"Today, time is probably one of the most valuable commodities and people wish to reside close to their work place and their recreational activities like theatres, restaurants and the harbour," Ms. Borrelli told Reuters.

Increased activity is no boom but property analysts are reluctant to call the renewed activity in the property market a boom.

"I think the industry is reluctant to use that word 'boom' because the next word you associate with it is 'bust'," said Mr. Palmer from Richard Ellis. But he added the recent fall in interest rates had helped property market confidence.

"Interest rates (are) coming off at the moment and that is helping property investment," Mr. Palmer said.

Burwood's Wawn estimated

there are about A\$5.0 billion worth of projects around Sydney's main Central Business District (CBD) from the central railway station down to the harbour, where the Sydney opera house and harbour bridge sit.

"I don't think Australia has seen this sort of revival for years," he said. Sydney and Australia's other major cities, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane, all suffered from a property slump in the early 1990s, following a lending binge by banks to property developers in the late 1980s.

The scars of the early 1990s property slump are evident: central Sydney is dotted with craters because many projects from the last boom never got past the excavation stage.

But over the past year the craters are starting to fill up as work starts on new hotels, offices and shops.

One of the most conspicuous craters is the site of the old Waltons retail store, which was demolished after its purchase by the failed Bond Corp group headed by jailed businessman Alan Bond, who planned to build a 92-storey tower dubbed "skyscraper."

Mr. Bond sold the site to a Japanese consortium including Japanese retailer Sogo CO Ltd, which is expected to make a decision soon on a proposed office and department store development on the site.

If Sogo goes ahead with its plans it would join a growing list of new retail construction projects.

Australia's largest retailer, Coles Myer Ltd, has started an A\$500 million redevelopment of its Grace Bros department store on Sydney's main thoroughfare, George Street.

Investors punt on latest property surge investors are being asked to dip into their pockets to fund some of the Sydney property developments, but with mixed success.

U.S. owned investment bank hankers trust launched an A\$100 million property trust, B1 Sydney Development Trust, to fund its A\$500 million office and retail development in Sydney's retail district.

Land Lease Corp Ltd launched the A\$325 million darling park trust in December to fund the group's A\$1.0 billion office and retail project in Sydney.

Analysts expect more property trusts to appear seeking funds for more projects over the next year.

Gemini News Service

Health fears rise as water quality goes down the drain

Scientists are urging the Cameroon government to act quickly to clean up the capital's deteriorating sewage-treatment system after traces of human excrement were found in tap water. But sceptical experts say the politicians already know about the problem. "Why do you think they drink mineral water?" asks one.

By Tony Seskus

YAOUNDE — The water-supply system in Yaounde has deteriorated to an "extremely dangerous" level, say scientists, who give warning of the growing threat of a fatal epidemic.

Already, cases of water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid are not uncommon — "and things could get a lot worse," says Nestor Bemmo, a professor of water sciences at Cameroon's national polytechnic college.

He and other scientists are urging the government to take urgent action. "We shouldn't be waiting for a catastrophe," says Mr. Bemmo. "No-one has access to healthy water any more."

Physically and chemically it's not healthy — none of it.

The main problem is the system's inability to treat waste water adequately, and is said to have deteriorated since the early 1980s, when the city was reputed to have one of the best water supplies in west Africa.

Now, only two of Yaounde's five sewage-treatment plants are working, according to one expert. Lakes have mutated into polluted marshes.

Meanwhile, 36 per cent of the capital's one million residents rely on risky well or river water.

Recent tests carried out by the polytechnic's science department found that city tap water contained evidence of human excrement and

dangerous bacteria. Mr. Bemmo believes the level of contamination is not consistently high enough to cause an immediate epidemic, but is enough to make many people sick.

The findings conflict with assurances given in late October by the national water supplies that Yaounde's water is of good quality. The company made the statement after it had cut supplies for 48 hours in mid-October because it had run out of purification chemicals.

There are no statistics showing how many people require hospital treatment for illnesses linked to tap water. But a nurse at Yaounde General Hospital, the largest in the city, says: "There are more patients than I can count."

Mr. Bemmo says his department will present its evidence to both municipal and national authorities, but expects little to be done.

"They know there's a problem. They've known it for years. Why do you think they drink mineral water?" he says. "The problem is so big, so expensive, they don't even want to start."

West Africa is no stranger to water problems, but Yaounde used to be different. When Cameroon's economy was booming in the 1970s and early '80s, the city developed a good system. By 1981, it supplied most of the capital's 436,000 residents with what Mr. Bemmo calls good quality water.

But as the capital's population soared towards one million, the water supply from a nearby reservoir became inadequate.

In 1991, the government said it would develop a new reservoir 45 kilometres south of Yaounde. This is fed by two rivers, but one of them flows through the heart of Yaounde and is polluted with industrial and domestic waste.

Treatment plants are failing to remove the waste or are not working

at all. "I've been to sewage-treatment plants in Yaounde that have frightened me," says Dr. Agendia, a waste water expert at the University of Yaounde.

"I went to one plant and asked an employee if everything was working. He showed me that the machines were running. I said, 'Yes, but are they working?' Do you take any tests? He looked at me like I was crazy. The problem is, the politicians like to see everything looking clean and running, but they don't do much beyond that. There's little follow-up. It's completely irresponsible."

Dr. Agendia describes the structural health of the water-treatment system in Yaounde as poor and inadequate. Much of the equipment — some of it decades old — is now obsolete. When things break down, they are left alone or fixed haphazardly. Only two of the city's five treatment plants are functioning, he says.

The cost of a major overhaul necessary to bring the system up to scratch would probably prove too expensive for the cash-strapped country. Instead, Agendia says

it should invest in wetlands water treatment. This process runs sewage water through a series of artificial marshes containing plants that absorb waste. Gradually, the water is cleansed and the plants can be used as fertiliser. Some European cities already use such a system.

Cameroon experimented with the technique from 1987 to 1993, but ended the tests when funding from the Stockholm-based International Foundation of Science dried up.

"It's a good system for Cameroon because it's inexpensive and produces a by-product that can be reused," says Agendia.

In the meantime, he rates educating the public as a top priority.

"The public has to learn that this is not acceptable," he says, holding up a bottle of week-old tap water. A murky orange sediment has settled at the bottom.

"If more people knew why they were sick — if they got angry about it — they might be able to convince the politicians to do something."

Interest rates (are) coming off at the moment and that is helping property investment," Mr. Palmer said.

Burwood's Wawn estimated

Group of Seven bids to instill stability on currency markets

BERLIN (R) — The world's financial leaders signalled that they would try to halt a rise in the U.S. dollar by indicating they wanted major exchange rates to stabilise around current levels.

They suggested at a meeting of the Group of Seven (G-7) rich nations, that the dollar had climbed enough from its record lows of 1995 and called for currency stability to create the conditions for world economic growth.

"We believe that major misalignments in exchange markets...have been corrected," said a statement issued after the talks among G-7 finance ministers and central bankers on Saturday.

"We reaffirmed our views that exchange rates should reflect economic fundamentals and that excess volatility is undesirable. We agreed to monitor developments on the currency markets and to cooperate as appropriate," the statement added.

French Finance Minister Jean Arthuis said the aim was to create the kind of long-term

stability that would give people confidence in the future and the desire to invest.

"It is in these conditions that you support economic growth and obviously employment," he told reporters after the one-day talks between Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

Two years ago, the G-7, trying to bring the dollar back from lows, called for an orderly reversal of its decline. The Berlin statement appeared to be meant to bring an end to that process.

While the dollar's rise has been good for the European Union, lifting exports and fuelling growth as it prepares for monetary union, it has left the yen on the weak side, posing a potential risk to its financial system.

And the United States, though it says a strong dollar helps it to keep inflation low by limiting import costs, must balance this against the threat to exports of too big a rise.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin repeated a tradi-

tional mantra that a strong dollar was in U.S. interests.

But in a subtle change of tone he repeated a comment first made on Friday that the dollar had been strong "for some time now" — seen as his way of backing a stable currency.

Finance ministers were careful to avoid talking the dollar down, which might send it sliding lower again.

"We are satisfied with the dollar," German Finance Minister Theo Waigel said. "We wanted a stronger dollar, and that is what we have."

Economists said the chances were that the dollar could in fact continue upwards, backed by an economy which is in a better state than most of its G-7 partners.

Japan's economy is weak and European Union currencies are undermined by uncertainty over its plan to launch a single currency in 1999 and by worries about unemployment, now at postwar records in France and Germany.

Mr. Rubin agreed here with other G-7 finance ministers on

reining in the booming dollar but declared that "a strong dollar is in the U.S. interest."

He said: "A strong dollar is in the United States interest and we have had a strong dollar for some time now."

But Mr. Rubin still noted that a strong greenback gives the United States lower inflation and "lower inflation will mean lower interest rates."

"A strong dollar also engenders confidence in capital markets which also tends to create lower interest rates in this country," Mr. Rubin told reporters.

He said the United States had "over the last four years" brought its budget deficit down "by over 62 per cent to what I believe is now the lowest deficit to GDP (gross domestic product) ratio in the G-7."

He added: "At the same time we're focusing on priorities that are critical to the future of productivity — education, aiding those who live in the inner city."

"I believe the president and Congress have not been this

close to reaching a balanced budget agreement in a long, long time. I believe we clearly should do it and can do it," Mr. Rubin said.

Japanese Finance Minister Hiroshi Matsuzuka declared that the exchange rate of the yen, which has been falling sharply against the dollar, had been corrected and that Tokyo had abandoned a policy of export-led growth.

In a clear falling-into-line with the U.S. position, he said Japan intended to pursue a policy of domestic demand-led growth in the future.

Speaking after a meeting of finance ministers and central bank chiefs of the G-7 leading industrial states, Mr. Matsuzuka said he hoped the conference statement on exchange rates would lead to a stable exchange market.

"The strong yen has been corrected," he also told reporters.

Mr. Matsuzuka said the recovery of the Japanese economy was firming and that the prospect of achieving 2.5 per cent growth this year had improved.

The International Monetary Fund is reckoning on average 2.5 per cent growth in 1997 for the G-7 countries.

The minister foresaw 2.2 per

cent growth in the Japanese economy next year. "The strength of the Japanese recovery is becoming firmer, and there is a higher probability of a sustained recovery," he said.

The minister was guarded regarding Japanese monetary policy, saying he was "cautious" on that front. "But I do expect moderate and sustained economic growth," he added.

Mr. Matsuzuka noted that the recent fall in the Japanese currency was "beginning to show up in rising import prices."

"What we are looking for is stability and a stable yen would support the structural reforms" being undertaken in Japan, he said, adding that this point had "met with kind understanding."

Among these reforms is allowing greater access to Japanese markets by foreign companies. The United States and Germany in particular have attributed the fall in the yen to the need for economic reforms in Japan. Washington has long been demanding Tokyo open up Japanese markets.

Mr. Matsuzuka met with Mr. Rubin in Berlin on the sidelines of the G-7 talks and assured him of Tokyo's inten-

tion of "encouraging strong domestic demand-led growth," a spokesman for Mr. Rubin said.

Mr. Matsuzuka told reporters after the G-7 conference that these reforms were intended to "allow Japan to stand on its own two feet."

He observed there appeared to be a serious commitment to structural reforms by west European governments. He also noted that because U.S. inflation had "settled down" and the American economy had picked up, Mr. Rubin and Federal Reserve (Central Bank) Chairman Alan Greenspan were displaying "brightened confidence."

Asked if he would be ready to respond if the markets sent the yen down again Monday, Mr. Matsuzuka said: "The (G-7) statement reflects the exact situation, nothing more nothing less."

For his part, the head of the Japanese central bank, Yasuo Matsushita, rejected suggestions that the Bank of Japan's low interest rate policy had undermined the yen. "Short-term rates have been low for some time, so the recent and abrupt movement is not due to our low interest rate policy," he said.

Clinton budget offers balance with no amendment

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton has unveiled a budget he said would keep the federal books in balance for more than 20 years starting in 2002 while protecting the neediest and offering billions in tax cuts.

While President Clinton appealed to Congress back his \$1.7 trillion spending plan for fiscal 1998, Republican leaders lost little time dismissing it as tepid and ineffectual.

Formally presenting the document, the president again voiced strong opposition to a constitutional amendment mandating a balanced budget.

"All it takes to balance the budget is discipline and action," the president said as he released his administration's fiscal roadmap toward a budget surplus of \$17 billion in 2002.

He denounced the amendment, backed by many Republicans in Congress, as "neither necessary nor wise."

"It could have numerous unwanted consequences. It could throw our budget into the courts. It could force judges to make decisions they would normally never make," he said.

The president insisted that the projected surplus five years from now was not a one-time gimmick.

"Based on our projections, we can maintain a balanced budget for more than two decades," he said.

The spending plan for fiscal 1998, starting Oct. 1, would leave a deficit of \$121 billion next year after which annual surpluses would shrink steadily until 2002.

But according to representative John Kasich, head of the House Budget Committee: "If Americans are looking for big bold change, it is not contained in here."

He said the Clinton plan did not go far enough toward curbing spending, lowering interest rates and boosting earning power.

Mr. Kasich spoke minutes after the president appealed to Republicans to reach an "honourable compromise" on a balanced budget.

"I believe we can do it as long as Republicans and Democrats agree that we have to achieve the goal," the president said.

The head of the Senate Budget Committee, Peter Domenici, added that he too was disappointed in the Clinton proposal.

"I thought we were going

to have a very bold budget, but I'm sorry to tell you I don't think it is."

He argued that the president's plan to cut taxes by \$98 billion to help finance college education was undermined by tax increases elsewhere worth \$76 billion.

"Clearly this is an area where the Republicans and the White House have a long way to go" to reach agreement, he warned.

The budget blends Mr. Clinton's ideological preference for an activist federal government with reductions in discretionary spending dear to the hearts of conservative Republicans who now control Congress.

"My budget reaches balance in 2002 the right way," Mr. Clinton said in a message accompanying the document, "cutting unnecessary and lower-priority spending while protecting our values."

Military spending is put at \$250.7 billion in fiscal 1998 under a plan that asks for special measures to fund U.S. operations in Bosnia and the Gulf.

The proposed budget would trim overall military spending, clip force levels slightly and extend for at least another year a long slide in new weapons orders.

Internationally, the budget proposes to pay off Washington's arrears to the United Nations and to bolster aid to the former Soviet Union and central Europe.

Overall, gross savings over a five-year period would be \$388 billion — before taking account of proposed tax cuts, welfare benefit restorations and funds to ensure health insurance for children.

Net savings in the period are estimated at \$252 billion. Domestic highlights in the budget include:

— \$18 billion over five years to restore cuts in welfare assistance to legal immigrants and in funds for nutrition programmes.

— \$98 billion in tax cuts over five years aimed principally at making it easier for families to finance a college education for their children.

— An increase in federal education spending to \$60 billion by 2002.

— A \$137 billion reduction in discretionary spending that makes cuts in programmes deemed unnecessary.

— A savings of \$100 billion — \$138 billion over six years — in Medicare, a federal programme providing health care to the elderly.

— A reduction of \$22 billion in Medicaid, a medical programme for the poor, through a per capita spending limit.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	FRF	GBP	ITL	YEN	CHF	SGD	HKD
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6523	0.6115	1.4201	122.82	1.3510	1621.90	1.8552	5.7555
DE Mark	0.6052	1.0000	0.3700	0.8596	74.28	0.8174	981.73	1.1233	3.3756
GB Sterling	1.6354	2.7011	1.3213	1.0000	200.64	2.2094	2652.32	3.0340	9.1182
CH Franc	0.7042	118.30	0.4302	86.50	0.9509	1141.64	130.63	1.3024	3.9274
JP Yen	0.0081	1.3438	0.4972	1.1553	1.0000	1.0991	13.20	150.98	4.5387
CA Dollar	0.7402	1.2256	0.4526	1.0581	1.10	1.20475	1.3785	1.4388	4.1388
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0181	0.3767	0.0875	1322.23	0.8325	11.44	3.4362	10.0038
NL Guilder	0.5390	89.00	0.3293	76.51	66.15	0.7277	873.82	1.0000	3.0038
FR Franc	0.1794	0.2962	0.1095	25.4549	22.00	0.2422	33.27	33.2700	1.0000

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	21.78	22.45
W. Texas	22.28	22.90
Bony	21.75	22.45
Dubai	19.20	19.60
UL Gas	205.00	205.00

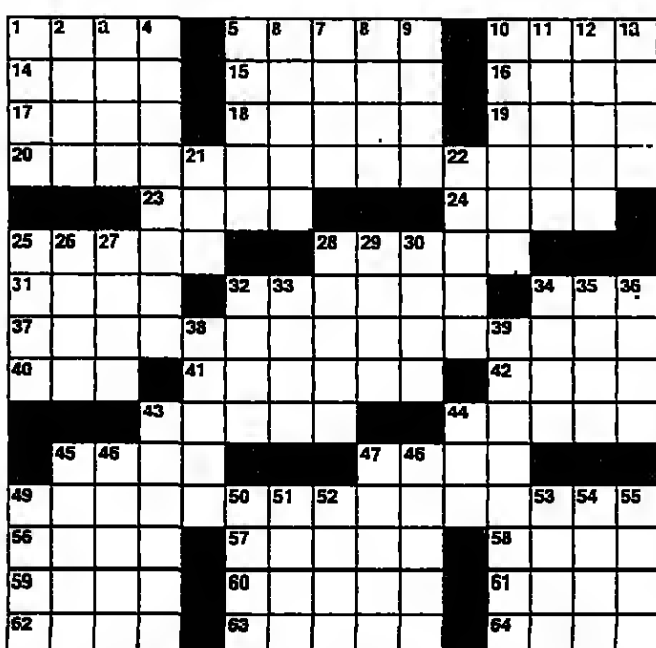
Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4408	0.16312	0.37893
AE Dirham	0.2725	0.45041	0.16888	0.38719
KW Dinar	3.3058	5.46448	2.02224	4.69704
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.38404	1.62259	3.76832
CY Pound	2.0155	3.3284	1.2319	2.8611

Metal Prices		
Metal	Spot	Offer
Gold (oz's)	340.9	341.2
Silver (oz's)	4.93	4.95
Platinum (oz's)	351.5	352.5
AL (3 Months)	1104.00	1104.00
CU (3 Months)	1104.00	1104.00
Zinc (3 Months)	1104.00	1104.00
Lead (3 Months)	1104.00	1104.00
Ni (3 Months)	1104.00	1104.00

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Period	1	3	6	9	12
USD	5.28	5.40	5.55	5.68	5.70
GBP	6.06	6.18	6.31	6.43	6.52
JPY	0.46	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.37
DEM	3.03	3.03	3.03	3.06	2.96
FRF	3.19	3.20	3.19	3.23	3.22
CHF	1.43	1.68	1.50	1.56	1.82
ITL	7.40	7.15	6.80	6.64	6.50

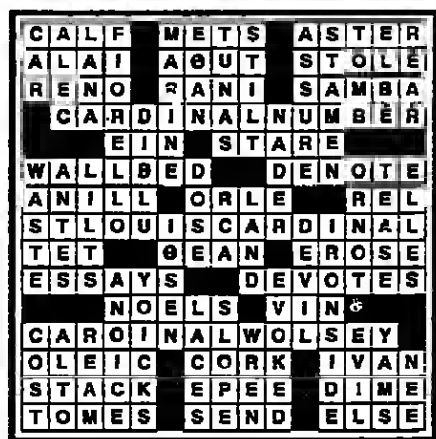
THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 B.A. word
 - 5 "Silence of the ..."
 - 10 Speech
 - 14 Concerning ships; abbr.
 - 15 Bring to bear
 - 16 Houtboy
 - 17 Atlanta feature
 - 18 Of an infectious agent
 - 19 Debauchee
 - 20 See 37A
 - 23 Finish off
 - 24 Those not elected
 - 25 Papal vestment
 - 28 Use a link
 - 31 Reddish hue
 - 32 Immediately
 - 34 Ovine remark
 - 37 Certain natives
 - 40 Recordings, briefly
 - 41 Distend
 - 42 Christian; abbr.
 - 43 Paul Revere, e.g.
 - 44 Toot
 - 45 Spread for bread
 - 47 Prison
 - 49 See 37A
 - 56 Olympics event
 - 57 Warning device
 - 58 Time gone by
 - 59 Asian country
 - 60 Press with the hands
 - 61 Bride of Lohengrin
 - 62 Hit hard
 - 63 Soothsayers
 - 64 Fishing item



by Frank R. Jackson

- DOWN
- 1 Celebes ox
 - 2 Freeway area
 - 3 Salad fish
 - 4 Unyielding one
 - 5 Of the same height
 - 6 Of a certain line
 - 7 Blackbird
 - 8 Boast
 - 9 WWII town
 - 10 Turning force
 - 11 Concerning
 - 12 Name of many French kings
 - 13 Sharp
 - 14 Hasten
 - 21 Famous
 - 22 Ring stone
 - 26 Kind of roast
 - 27 Experts
 - 28 Detection device
 - 29 Heal, in a way
 - 30 Skin problem
 - 32 Sulphuric, for one
 - 33 Story
 - 34 Boxer Max
 - 35 Before; pref.
 - 36 Name in tennis
 - 38 Dullard
 - 39 Not fitting
 - 43 Late
 - 44 Knight's title
 - 45 Chicago's airport
 - 46 Not widespread
 - 47 Wind — (flight problem)
 - 48 In inclined
 - 49 Fodder trough
 - 50 Put a question to
 - 51 Sherry
 - 52 Indian tribe
 - 53 Plant of the mustard family
 - 54 Abstract being
 - 55 Lat. abbr.

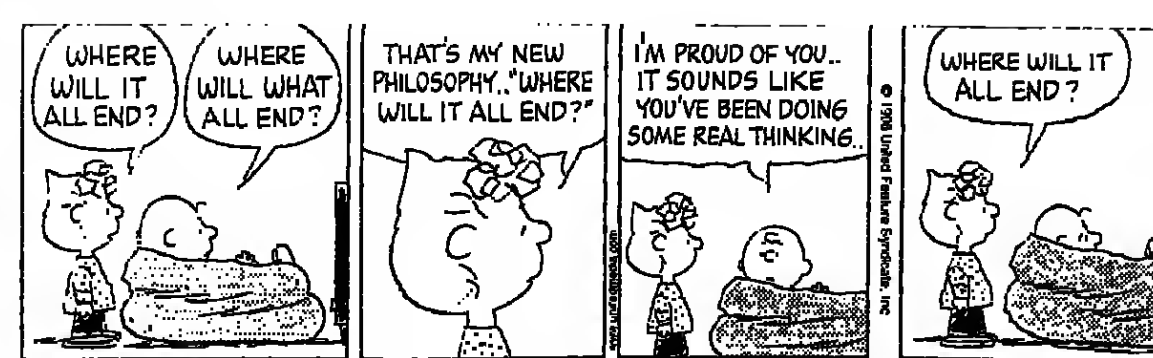


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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Rignier Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You'll have some fine new ideas today, however, don't get bogged down by details and forget the main points. Avoid any boring routines later this evening so that you can get the major aspects of a new project completed.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't waste your time today investigating pleasures which you know are too expensive, since you could be doing other fun activities. Show your mate your devotion later this evening — vocally and he or she will be pleased.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Leave the house early today and see the prominent people who can help you to become more affluent. Public tasks can be very beneficial, so see in what manner of operation you can be most helpful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is a fine day today to handle some important activities which you've been putting off until a more feasible period. Handle your correspondence tonight and make sure you are correct with all of the information contained.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Think about some amusement you've enjoyed in days before and get into them today. Take your mate out for a good time later this evening and be or she will enjoy all of the attention you are supplying.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Try to help some family friends attain their ambitions today, and put aside your own wishes for the time being. Invite an interesting guest into your home later this evening and everyone will have got involved in stimulating conversations.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a fine day today for accomplishing much in the business world, so concentrate upon all of your career activities. Be more positive when dealing with others and thereby you can see their point of view.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Focus your attention today on increasing your income by forgetting pleasure for awhile. Steer clear of friends who may distract you from pursuing your desires to have a successful method of operation in career activities.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is not the day today to ask for a favour of a superior, since he or she is likely to turn you down. Try to be more self-reliant, and don't depend on friends to pull you out of a jam, since you must do everything yourself.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Steer clear today of a new contact who could easily get you into some very big difficulty. Your greatest happiness can come from your mate, who is always eager to lend a supportive ear to any difficulty which you may have.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) The company of a long-time friend and some relatives will help you forget your worries. Avoid a disagreement with your mate later this evening and thereby there will pleasant harmony existing in your residence.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Tend to your credit affairs today which have some hidden difficulties and which need attention. A superior will be quite receptive to granting you a favour later this evening, so don't hesitate to inquire.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx.

Jordan for Aqa

AMMAN (R) — Jordan has offered an offer to international firms to set up an oil refinery and oil terminal in the Red Sea port of Aqaba, officials said Monday.

The offer, which the energy minister is seeking proposals for, is to build a 10,000-barrel-per-day refinery and oil terminal.

In the last year, Jordan signed an agreement with the United States to build a 10,000-barrel-per-day refinery and oil terminal in Aqaba.

The agreement is a landmark in Jordan's economic development.

The agreement is a landmark in Jordan's economic development.

Jordan requests 10-year gas before reducing

JORDAN, LIKE MANY other nations, has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1994. The WTO is a global organization that regulates trade between nations.

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Davis Cup Dutch comeback sinks Romania as Spain beat Germany

PARIS (AFP) — The Netherlands, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, booked their passage into the Davis Cup quarterfinals in Bucharest on Sunday when they completed a thrilling 3-2 victory over World Group newcomers Romania.

Jan Siemerink, who crashed to a shock defeat against the Romanian number-two Andrei Pavel on Friday to leave his team trailing 0-2, was the Dutch hero on Sunday when he scored an inspired five-set victory over Adrian Panu.

Siemerink, 26, left the court exhausted after his four-and-a-half hour 7-6 (8/6), 5-7, 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 victory — but the win, which put the Dutch back to 2-2 in the tie, was enough to drain the fighting spirit from the Romanians and Pavel won only six games against Paul Haarhuis in the vital final singles.

The Czech Republic, who were also trailing 1-2 at home to India after surprisingly losing Saturday's doubles, were another team to turn around pending defeat.

Former French Open finalist Petr Korda recovered after dropping the first set to beat Leander Paes 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 and Jiri Novak then clinched the Czechs' berth in the last eight by beating India's 478th-ranked Mahesh Bhupathi 6-1, 6-4, 6-3.

Sweden, last year's finalists who had dropped the opening singles on Friday, stormed home to a 4-1 victory against Switzerland in Lulea.

Thomas Enqvist gave the home side the winning point when he defeated big-serving Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 in the first of the reverse singles and Magnus Larsson then clinched the dead rubber by beating Ivo Heuberger 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Spain and Italy also won 4-1 margins.

On clay courts in Mallorca, after surprisingly losing Saturday's doubles, Spain clinched their victory over a depleted Germany, who could not call up either Boris Becker or Michael Stich, by winning both of Sunday's singles.

Carlos Moya, the recent Australian open finalist, scored a 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 victory over Hendrik Dreekmann and Albert Costa then beat Marc Kevin Goeller 2-6, 7-6.



Spain's Carlos Moya (2ND R) is joined by team captain Manolo Santana (R) and team mates Alex Corretja (L) and Carlos Costa as they celebrate his victory in the third singles match for their Davis Cup World Group qualifying tie against Germany's Hendrik Dreekman to secure his country's 3-1 victory over Germany (Reuters photo)



Chilean tennis player Marcelo Rios celebrates his victory over Ecuadorian Nicolas Lapentti in a Davis Cup Group One American zone match (Reuters photo)

(7/5), 6-1. German coach Niki Pilić was rich in his praise for his opponents.

"No one can beat the Spaniards on clay. They are the best in the world on this surface," he shrugged, adding: "I don't think we would not have beaten them even with Michael Stich and Boris Becker in the team."

Spain, whose last appearance in a Davis Cup final came in 1967 when they were beaten by Australia,

will now play Italy for a place in the semi-finals. Italy had comfortably wrapped up their win against Mexico on Saturday when they triumphed in the doubles.

On Sunday Renzo Furlan beat Alejandro Hernandez 6-2, 6-3 but Omar Camporese, substituting for the flu-stricken Andrea Gaudenzi, went down 6-2, 3-6, 4-6 to Luis Herrera. South Africa clinched a 3-1 win over 1994 and 1995 finalists Russia, who were without Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Alexander Volkov.

The final singles was not played since the doubles had been held over from Saturday because of rain.

Ellis Ferreira and Grant Stafford scored the winning point in the tie when they routed Andrei Cherkasov and Andrei Olhovskiy 6-2, 3-6, 6-0, 6-2 but with nothing left to play for, Wayne Ferreira was beaten in the reverse singles by Chesnokov.

Russian coach Shamil Tarpišev was economical with his congratulations for South Africa, saying that his team were had gone into the tie as underdogs.

"We fought hard but we were outclassed," Tarpišev said. "I think Cherkasov played his best game in five years against Ferreira."

Tarpišev, however, rated South Africa's chances quite highly for their next Davis Cup encounter away to Sweden.

"In its current composition, the South African team is strong and well balanced. Taking into account the current Swedish team, I would say the chances are 50-50," he said.

Arnoud Boetsch saved defending champions France from complete humiliation by winning the final singles and avoid Australia notching up a clean-sweep.

Boetsch defeated Patrick Rafter 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) but Sandon Stolle, who made his debut in the competition, earlier beat French number-one Cedric Pioline, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4.

Australia will now play the Czech Republic in Adelaide.

Noah and Boetsch both pointed to the French team's difficulty in adapting to the fast grass surface of White City.

Noah, who never thrived on grass as a player and who won his Grand Slam title at the French Open on clay quipped: "Next time we will ask Newcombe to coach us to play on grass... grass is not good for me."

Newcombe was pleased with his team's play.

"We lost the first two sets and won the next 12. It was a great effort against the defending champions. I couldn't ask for more," he said.

Australia had gone into the match first-choice singles players Mark Philippoussis and Jason Stoltenberg.

Lewis still amazed by McCall's behaviour

LONDON (AFP) — Lennox Lewis, the new World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight champion, arrived back in London Sunday, still amazed by the bizarre behaviour of his title opponent Oliver McCall.

Lewis was awarded a fifth-round TKO in Las Vegas on Friday night when McCall failed to defend himself. Lewis, who became the first British fighter to regain the heavyweight world crown, said he thought McCall was "just plain mad."

"He was in no fit state to climb in the ring," said the new champion.

Lewis' manager Frank Maloney said McCall's actions — refusing to throw punches and crying in his corner before the start of the fifth round — showed he was emotionally unprepared for the fight.

McCall had been in drug rehabilitation since December, when he was arrested after throwing a Christmas tree in a hotel lobby.

It was one of three brushes with the law last year, and one of many attempts by McCall to kick drug and alcohol problems.

Lewis, a former Olympic gold medalist, is now expected to fight compatriot and World Boxing Organisation (WBO) champion Henry Akwande.

But the new champion said: "Bring on anyone. I don't care."

Eventually I will unify the titles — perhaps in 12 months — you know what boxing politics are like.

"I don't really feel left out of the picture. Left Tyson and Holyfield have their rematch and beat each other up. I'll take the leftovers."

Reflecting on his victory on Friday, Lewis admitted: "Winning this title feels better than when I won the first one because this one I won it in the ring."

"I was very happy with my own performance and that's what matters."

On Saturday, McCall held an emotional press conference in Las Vegas claiming his actions in the fight had been a deliberate strategy to counter Lewis' clinching.

"Once I knew the (second) round was coming to the end, I was like, 'man, he's gonna hold,'" McCall said.

Entering the third and fourth rounds, he explained, his strategy was "to go out and try and do a little rope-a-dope and intimidate him to open up and throw punches at me."

He angrily denied that he threw the fight and challenged Lewis to a rematch.

"If I was to throw the fight, don't you know that all I had to do was fall down and don't get up, fall and say 'I've fallen and I can't get up?' I would not do that."

McCall said he was "not too concerned" that Nevada boxing officials are withholding his \$3.075 million purse.

The rambling press conference did little to reassure observers about McCall's mental state.

Those present included psychiatrist Leonora Petty, who examined McCall for more than an hour Saturday morning.

She claimed he was mentally fit, but also suggested follow-up treatment.

Sainz moves into lead in Swedish Rally

KARLSTAD (R) — Spaniard Carlos Sainz moved into the lead of the Swedish Rally at the end of the third day on Sunday after his rivals each encountered troubles in difficult conditions.

The Ford driver, who has never won the Swedish event, took the lead from Briton Colin McRae, in a Subaru, on the 17th stage and maintained his advantage to end the day 12 seconds clear.

"Today's stages have been very difficult because the road surfaces have changed so quickly with different combinations of gravel, snow and ice," said Sainz. "We pushed hard all day and we are not going to ease off now."

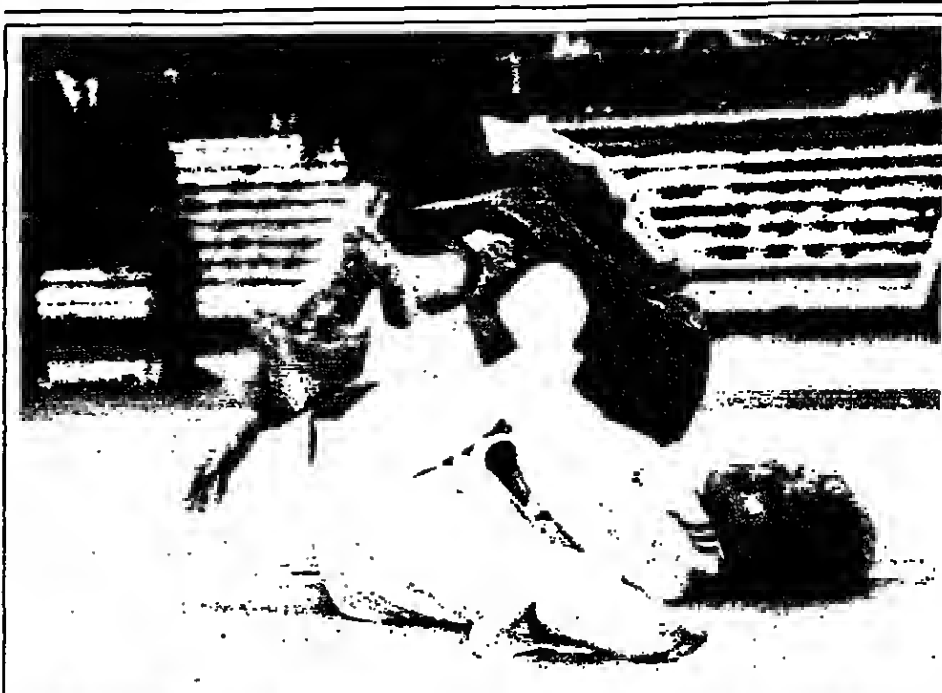
McRae had earlier grabbed the lead from overnight leader and team mate Kenneth Eriksson, who was suffering from gearbox

problems, but slipped back into the clutches of Sainz after falling foul of both the conditions and brake problems on his car.

"Running at the front of the field, Kenneth and I have been sweeping the stages clear of up to eight inches (12 cm) of mixed ice, slush and gravel — all to the benefit of those behind us," explained McRae.

The most impressive drive of the day came from world champion Tommi Makinen, who ended the day in fourth place, 54 seconds behind Sainz, despite having been penalised one minute 20 seconds for a service infringement on Saturday evening.

The final six stages of the rally, the second on the World Championship calendar, take place around Karlstad in west Sweden on Monday.



Atsuko Nagai (top) of Japan in action to beat Amarilis Savon of Cuba in the women's 48 kgs final at the Paris International Judo tournament. Nagai won the gold medal by waza-ari (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Grant jumps seasonal best

WUPPERTAL, Germany (AFP) — Veteran British high jumper Dalton Grant produced the best jump indoors of the year in the world here on Sunday of 2.33 metres — but he finished second to Norwegian Steinar Hoen on the countback rule. The 30-year-old Grant, winner of the 1991 European cup, and Hoen jumped three centimetres higher than third placed Australian Tim Forsyth, while Grant's compatriot Steve Smith jumped 2.27m to finish joint fourth.

Shearer resumes training

LONDON (AFP) — England captain Alan Shearer resumed full training on Monday and is "very hopeful" of playing against Italy in their crucial World Cup qualifier at Wembley on Wednesday. Shearer, the world's most expensive player when he signed from Blackburn for 15 million pounds (\$22.5 million) has been one of several key players battling against injuries — in his case a back problem — and England coach Glenn Hoddle is desperate for the striker to play. The Newcastle star said he was "very hopeful" of playing and added: "I am looking forward to it. Monday will be more intense and it really is a case of starting to look forward to the game now. 'Italy are a side full of world class players and if we are to beat them on Wednesday then we are going to have to be at our best,'" Shearer said.

Rubin back to her best

LINZ (AFP) — Seventh-seeded Chanda Rubin of the United States showed that she is back at her best after her injury-marred 1996 season by winning the WTA event here on Sunday. Rubin, who will be 20 in nine days time and who defeated top-seed Jana Novotna in an exciting three set clash 24 hours earlier, beat Karina Habudova of the Czech Republic in straight-sets. The American started slowly, possibly feeling the effects of her gruelling match with Novotna and trailed 2-0 before surging back to score a 6-4, 6-2 win.

Belgium striker Weber quits

BRUSSELS (R) — Croatian-born Belgium and Anderlecht striker Josip Weber was quoted on Monday as saying he was being forced to quit soccer because of persistent knee problems. "I've had surgery and anaesthetics seven, eight times and now it's enough... I don't think there's much sense in resuming training again," Weber told Belgian newspapers. Weber, 32, gained Belgian nationality in March 1994 which allowed him to take part in the world cup finals in the United States in June. Leading scorer in Belgium for three years in a row from 1992 to 1994, he was long believed to be the striker his new compatriots had been waiting for. But he injured his knee shortly after moving to Anderlecht from Cercle Brugge later that year and has never fully recovered.

England-Italy World Cup qualifier live on Orbit-ESPN

ORBIT-ESPN Sports will air live and satellite exclusive coverage of the Group 2 World Cup qualifier between England and Italy on Wednesday, February 12 at 8:00 p.m. GMT.

Introduced by Khalid Yassine, the show will have interviews with the players and footage of their preparation for the clash, along with analysis from soccer expert Abdelmajid Chetali and commentator Khaled Al Harban.

With only one country from the group progressing directly to the finals in France in 1998, this game is of crucial importance. England is top of the group at present with nine points from three games, while Italy is second with six points from two games.

The Italians will be under new coach Cesare Maldini who had great success with the Under-21 team before taking over the post vacated by Arrigo Sacchi. Maldini has promised a return to a more attacking formation and with the likes of Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola and Alessandro Del Piero of Juventus in the team.

This will be England's sternest challenge since Euro '96. England coach Glenn Hoddle will be relying on the extraordinary form of captain and striker Alan Shearer who has notched up 20 goals in the Premier League this season. England will also call on two impressive young stars in Liverpool's Steve McManaman and Manchester United's David Beckham.



Croatian tennis player Goran Ivanisevic returns a backhand to Morocco's Karim Alami during their fourth round Davis Cup match at Osijek in Eastern Croatia. Ivanisevic won the match 6-2, 7-5 (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Dennis Quaid, David Thewlis
& Sean Connery.... in

DRAGON HEART

Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Adel Imam, Shireen
& Saeed Saleh

Bakhit Wa Adilah (2)
(ARABIC)

Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

Adel Imam, Shireen
& Saeed Saleh

Bakhit Wa Adilah (2)
Al Jardal Walkankah

Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

Bakhit Wa Adilah (2)
Al Jardal Walkankah

Shows: 12:15, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD "2"

now on daily

"Custom Made Citizen"

The satirical play starring Mousa Hijazin

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL: 625155

The theatre opens on the
Ramadan Holiday
with the new play entitled
Aman.. Ya Ho

Jordan training

By Aileen B...

AMMAN — The Jordanian team Wednesday...

The Jordanian team...

The training camp...

The Jordanian team...

The Jordanian team...

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The Jordanian team...

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problems, but slipped back into the clutch of Samir after falling foul of both the clutch and brake problems on his car.

"Running at the front of the field, Samir and I have been sweeping the stages, clearing up to eight inches (22 cm) of mud in slush and gravel," all to the benefit of those behind us," explained McKee.

The most impressive drive of the day came from world champion Tommi Mäkinen, who ended the day in fourth place, 54 seconds behind Samir, despite a spin for a service intervention on Saturday.

The final six stages of the rally, the snow on the World Championship calendar, will place around Karlstad in west Sweden on Monday.



to beat Amarilis Savon of Cuba in the national Judo tournament, Nagai won

IBF

England-Italy World Cup qualifier live on Orbit-ESPN

Alban Shkurti is hopeful of a top ranking in the World Cup qualifier for Italy in March. He has been in the center of the 1997 Olympic Games in Atlanta, where he won a bronze medal in the 57kg category.

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Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

The theatre opens on the Ramadan Holiday with the new play entitled **Aman.. Ya Ho**

Sports

Jordan's soccer team begins training camp in Baghdad

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's national soccer team Wednesday play their Iraqi counterparts in their third friendly international match in preparation for the upcoming World Cup qualifiers which start in April.

The Jordanian team started an intensive two-week training camp in Baghdad Monday. The team is scheduled to have several training sessions twice daily and play three matches against the Iraqi junior and men's national teams before returning to Amman Feb. 25.

The training camp will be a good opportunity for Jordanian head coach Mohammad Awad to amend any shortcomings which he may have come across after two friendlies against the Lebanese national team last week.

Jordan lost the first encounter in Beirut 1-0 while the second one in Amman ended in a 0-0 draw.

Other friendlies scheduled by the Jordan Soccer Federation include two matches against Syria, March 16 in Amman and March 23 in Damascus, and another two against Oman in Muscat March 8 and 11.

Jordan's Asian Group 3 qualifiers start in Manama, Bahrain against the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain April 8.

The Lebanese team will be facing Kuwait and Singapore in Group 7, while Iraq will be playing Pakistan and Kazakhstan in Group 9.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest

the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into two groups.

The top team in each of the 10 groups will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

The Kingdom's team includes Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mu'az Rishah, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Yousef Ammouri, Amjad Taher, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Isam Mahmoud, Abdallah Abu Zame'h, Faisal Ibrahim, Hussein Shananeh, Abdallah Shiyah, Ra'fat Ali, Adnan Awad, Raed Momani, Bassam Al Khatib, Aref Hussein, Khaled Yousef, Munir Abu Hantash, Nart Yada and Walid Abdul Rahman.

Seven of Al Faisali's players, currently on leave to take part in the Arab Champion Cup in Morocco next month, will not join the national team's training camp. They are Ahmad Khalil, Mohammad Mahadin, Jamal Abu Abed, Suhbi Suleiman, Ja'far Hamad, Hassouneh Sheikh and Jiryes Tadrus. Head coach Mohammad Awad said the seven might join the team starting with the matches in Oman.

Al Faisali will join Arab Cup champs Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh, Arab Clubs champions Egypt's Al Ahli, and runner-up Morocco's Al Raja (see separate story).

Petrosani conclude visit with 1-0 win

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Romania's Jiul Petrosani Sunday beat Al Faisali 1-0 in the second friendly match held as part of Al Faisali's preparations for the Arab Champions Cup in Morocco in March.

Al Faisali had won the first encounter 1-0 on Thursday by Suhbi Suleiman's goal after an exciting match in which the Romanians missed two shots which hit the post saving Al Faisali from a sure loss.

Jiul Petrosani, who were Romanian champions in 1975, are currently sixth in their country's soccer league. They had arrived in Amman Wednesday on an invitation from Al Faisali.

Prior to the arrival the guest team had played two matches in Syria where they beat Al Dimashqi 2-0 and lost to Al Jeish 3-2.

Al Faisali are now on an intensive training programme for their upcoming championship against Arab top teams: They are Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh, Arab Clubs Champions Egypt's Al Ahli, Morocco's Al Raja and Al Faisali.

Al Faisali's team consists of: Anis Shafeeq, Waleed Abu Hmeid, Freidon Saeed, Raed Jbour, Mohammad Mahadeen, Ahmad Khalil, Firas Khalaleh, Ali Zoubi, Ihab Nasser, Rami Abu Fanar, Osama Talal, Ratch Awadat, Ziad Abu Shanab, Jamal Abu Abed, Suhbi Suleiman, Hassouneh Sheikh, Haidham Shouh, Harem Agel, Jiryes Tadrus, Mahmoud Mattar, Jaafar Hamad and Mohammad Mansour.

Pankratov sets 2 records, promises more

PARIS (R) — Denis Pankratov, denied two world records in Paris last year because of a dope test blunder, set two more in two days at this year's edition of the "Islands" short-course World Cup meeting over the weekend and warned that others could follow soon.

The Russian double Olympic champion clocked 51.78 seconds in the 100 metres butterfly on Sunday, bettering the record of 51.93 he set last Wednesday in Imperia, Italy.

On Saturday, the double Olympic champion had set another world record by clocking 23.35 in the 50 metres butterfly, improving the previous mark of 23.45 set by Briton Mark Foster in December 1995 in Sheffield, England.

It was sweet recompense for the Russian, who had broken both the 100 and 200 metres butterfly short-course world marks at last year's final World Cup meeting in Paris, only to be denied the records because French meet organisers had run out of bottles to administer the dope tests necessary for ratification.

"I like this swimming pool," he said after setting his fourth short-course world record in just nine days in the last three meetings of the eight-venue World Cup series in 25-metre pools.

Pankratov began his record spree in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on February 1 when he clocked 1:52.64 in the 200 metres butterfly.

"I don't feel bitter about what happened to me here last year because the Olympics then brought me some consolation," he said, referring to the dope test fiasco.

Pankratov said breaking records would be his main goal this year.

"I think I can do better in all three events (50, 100 and 200 metres butterfly)," he said. "In the 50 metres, I think I can go under 23 (seconds)."

When breaking both records in Paris, Pankratov swam under the water for most of the first 25 metres, surfacing only once shortly before the turn.

"I could go just as fast on top of the water but I would lose more energy," he explained.

Hingis the favourite as Paris Open begins

PARIS (AFP) — Martina Hingis, who became the youngest-ever winner of a Grand Slam singles title this century at the Australian Open last month, returns to European competition at the Paris Indoor Open this week a hot favourite to prolong her winning streak.

The 16-year-old, who has moved up to second in the world rankings behind Steffi Graf, is unbeaten so far this year with three tournament titles already.

And she looks an odds-on certainty to add a fourth when the \$480,000 Paris Open gets underway at the Coubertin Stadium here on Tuesday.

The top-seeded Swiss player, bidding to narrow the gap in the rankings still further on Graf who is currently nursing a knee injury, said after her latest success in Tokyo a fortnight ago: "Right now I'm number two in the world and it's going to be hard just staying there," she said.

Despite the outward show of diffidence, Hingis is nonetheless intent on taking over from Graf and replacing Monica Seles as the youngest-ever world number one in the coming months.

Seles, who is now sixth in the world, reached the top spot in the rankings in March 1991 at the age of 17 years three months and 19

days. That was seven days younger than the previous youngest world number one — American Tracy Austin.

According to the seedings — Hingis' main threat in Paris should come from second-seeded Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic and Graf's third-seeded compatriot Anke Huber.

But many see the big-bitting but erratic Mary Pierce, Hingis' opponent in the Australian Open final, as the player most likely to upset the form book.

On her day the 22-year-old Pierce can beat anybody and, seeded eighth for this week's tournament, she was drawn on Monday in the bottom-half of the 32-player lineup which means that another final against Hingis could be on the cards.

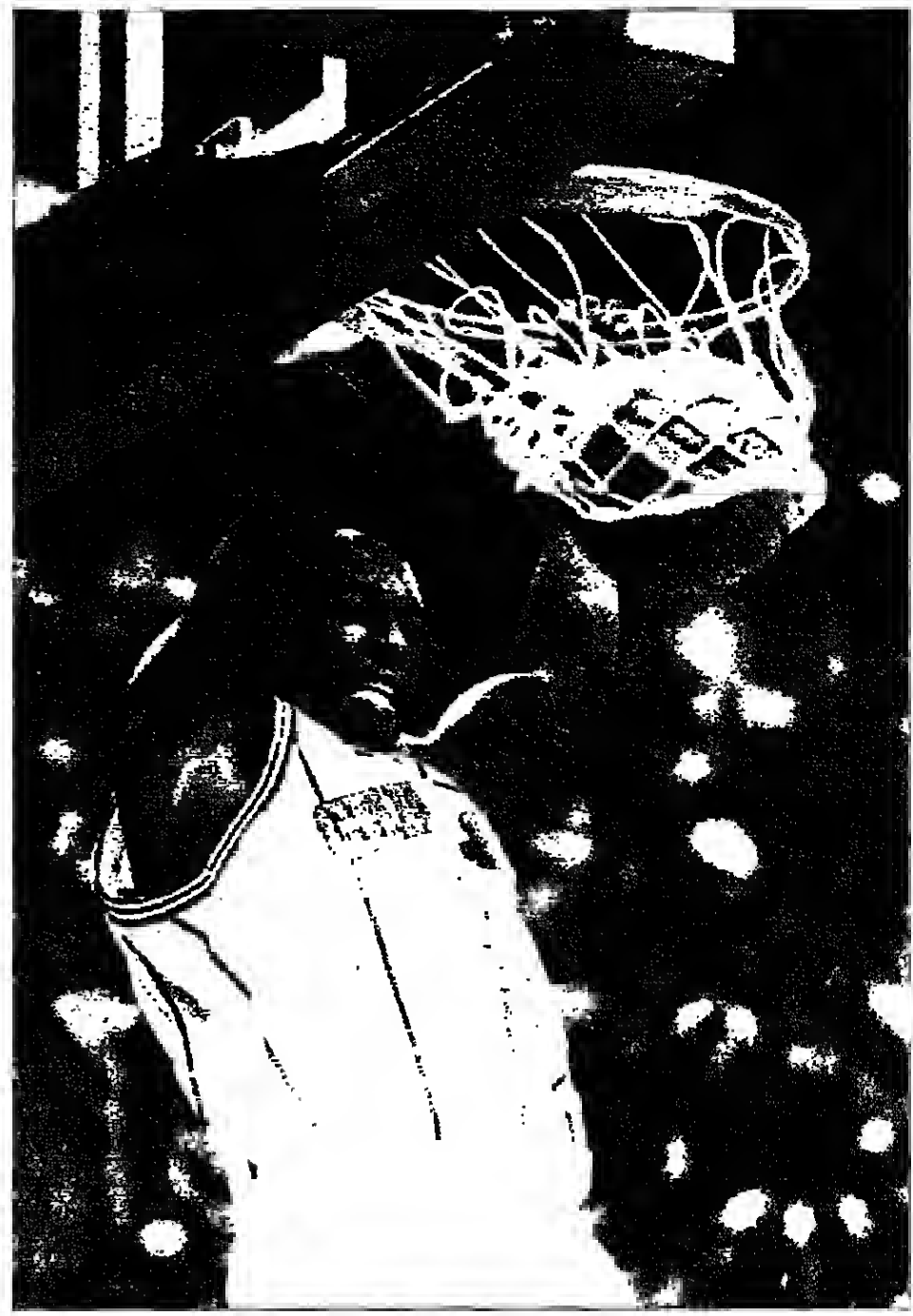
However the Canadian-born French player is likely to confront more problems off court than on it.

For a start she has to win back her credibility with the home fans.

Twelve months ago she was jeered off the Coubertin show court after losing badly in the first round to Germany's Petra Begerow.

"It's typical," snapped Pierce after the defeat. "In France, when you are winning everybody is with you. But when you are losing they turn their backs on you."

Rice, Jordan make history as East win All-Star game



CLEVELAND (AFP) — Glen Rice scored a record 20 points in the third quarter and Michael Jordan grabbed the first triple-double in All-Star game history to power the East to a 132-120 victory over the West here Sunday.

Rice was named Most Valuable Player of the National Basketball Association's 47th mid-season classic.

On a day where the 50 greatest players in league history were assembled at halftime, Rice shot his way to the greatest quarter and Jordan posted the greatest all-around game in the history of the series, which the Eastern Conference leads, 30-17.

The East took control for good in the third quarter behind Rice, who shot poorly in Saturday's long distance shootout and missed six of seven first-half shots.

The Charlotte Hornets guard drilled four straight three-pointers and never cooled off, making eight of 11 shots in the period as the East built a 97-87 lead. He had more points in the period than any other player had in the game.

Rice broke the record set in 1968 by Philadelphia 76ers guard Hal Greer, on hand as one of the 50 all-time greatest. Rice ended up with 26 points, including a record 24 in the second half.

Wilt Chamberlain — also a top-50 member — scored 23 points in a half in 1962. Tom Chambers equalled the mark in 1987.

Jordan, the first of the 50 introduced at intermission, keyed a second-quarter surge that saw the East erase almost all of a 23-point deficit in a five-minute span. The superstar guard of the Chicago Bulls did not shoot well but finished with 14 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists.

Orlando Magic point guard Penny Hardaway made sure the West didn't rally, directing the offence

Mourning on the East and Shaquille O'Neal for the West. Houston's Charles Barkley and Clyde Drexler also sat out with ailments as the game featured six first-time All-Stars.

Rice caught fire right after the east reclaimed the lead for good. He made three three-pointers in 51 seconds, boosting the lead to 70-60 with 9:44 to play in the third.

The West pulled within 10 points before Rice went inside for a pair of dunks 30 seconds apart to push the advantage back to 86-72 with 4:02 left. He capped his record-setting period with another dunk and a short bank shot.

Detroit Pistons forward Grant Hill scored 11 points for the East. Baker grabbed 12 rebounds and Atlanta Hawks forward Christian Laettner added 11.

Utah guard John Stockton scored 12 points and Payton added 10 assists for the West.

Rice and company trailed by 23 points midway through the second quarter before east coach Doug Collins went to a small, quick lineup that featured Jordan, Pippen, Hill, Hardaway and Laettner. The results were stunning.

After a three-pointer by Mitch Richmond of the Sacramento Kings gave the West a 56-34 edge, the East ran off 17 consecutive points.

Jordan scored the last five on a free throw, jumper and a tip-in that cut the deficit to 56-51 with one minute to go before halftime, when the West led 60-57.

After the break, Collins played another hunch, starting Pippen with reserves Laettner, Brandon, Baker and Rice.

Baker opened the third quarter with a pair of dunks, giving the East its first lead since the opening three minutes and jump-starting a 10-0 burst, and Rice took over from there.

After a half-season of watching the plodding Cavaliers, fans at Gund Arena were treated to an athletics meeting enhanced by injuries to post players Patrick Ewing and Alonzo

Charlotte Hornets Glen Rice of the East Team dunks the ball during the NBA All-Star game at Gund Arena. Rice, the game's MVP, scored 26 points, setting an All-Star game record with most points in a quarter and in a half. The East won 132-120 (Reuters photo)

and finishing with 19 points.

Milwaukee Bucks forward Vin Baker also added 19 for the East, which has won three of the last four All-Star games.

Guards Latrell Sprewell of

Defeat at Espanyol leaves Barcelona 8 points adrift

MADRID (R) — Barcelona were left eight points adrift of Spanish League leaders Real Madrid after going down 2-0 to two Florin Raducioiu penalties in Sunday's Catalan derby with Espanyol.

"It's never over till it's over," said Barcelona coach Bobby Robson, who had seen his side reduced to 10 men in the first half when Luis Figo was sent off.

Earlier Real had come back from a goal down to beat struggling Hercules 3-2, with Raul Gonzalez scoring the winner.

The setback for Robson's team came just three days after Barcelona

had knocked Real out of the Spanish Cup.

Another British coach in trouble is John Toshack, whose time as the late figure of Deportivo Coruna fans looked to be coming to an end after a 2-2 draw with Celta Vigo.

The result meant Deportivo stayed fifth, separated on goal difference from fourth-placed Real Sociedad, who lost 1-0 to Valencia on Saturday.

Both teams are five points behind Real Betis, who secured third place with a 3-1 win over Extremadura and have a game in hand.

The bad news for Betis is that a yellow card for Alfonso Perez — his fifth

of the season — will mean that the international striker misses next Saturday's vital game at Real Madrid.

Atletico Madrid came back from a Compostela goal to play some of their best football of the season in a 4-1 home victory. Atletico are sixth but, with neighbours Real fully 16 points ahead, their chances of retaining the title are looking increasingly slim.

Many commentators feel that Radomir Antic is now concentrating his attention on next month's European Cup quarter-final against

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI

PESSIMIST'S PARADISE

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Israel tightens 'copter security; leading figures discuss Lebanon options

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel has boosted security measures for its military helicopters following the mid-air collision between two of the aircraft which killed 73 soldiers, an army official said Monday.

Air force commander General Eitan Ben Eliahau also told reporters that the commission investigating last Tuesday's crash, Israel's worst military accident, is expected to issue its interim conclusions by the end of the week.

Under new measures introduced after flights resumed this week, Gen. Ben Eliahau has ordered that the distances between aircraft in flight is increased. "I can't permit these formations of the Yassour 2000 helicopters to continue to fly as if nothing had happened, after what happened. But our aim is to establish permanent norms to ensure the aircraft will perform their functions," Gen. Ben Eliahau said.

The two Yassour helicopters crashed last Tuesday evening while they were carrying troop reinforcements to Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon.

Despite initial reports that fog or rain may have been to blame for the collision, military sources say human error was a more likely cause.

Gen. Ben Eliahau said he was satisfied with the veteran helicopter pilots and noted "the remarkable performances" of the Yassour

2000, the Israeli version of the U.S. CH-53 Sikorsky.

On Sunday, he flew as a co-pilot in one of the aircraft.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also flew in a Yassour 2000 on the way to his summit Sunday night with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the Beit Hannun border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Reserve General David Ivry, who is heading the inquiry, and other members of the commission also flew in the aircraft Sunday.

The crash of the two Israeli helicopters may fuel debate in Israel about withdrawal from South Lebanon, but the Jewish state is unlikely to be diverted from its goals in the area, a Hizbullah official said Monday.

The accident "will strengthen internal debate and the struggle inside occupied Palestine about the presence of Israeli troops in Lebanon, and it will increase the opinions calling for withdrawal," the deputy secretary general of the Syrian and Iranian-backed Hizbullah, Sheikh Naem Qasim, told a Kuwaiti daily.

"But I do not think it will be effective (in leading to a withdrawal), because the Israeli leadership is searching for a way to benefit from the occupation in Lebanon," Sheikh Qasim told Al Rai Al Aam.

He said Israel is using the continued presence of its troops in a buffer strip in

South Lebanon to push for a complete political agreement with Lebanon, and also to influence Syria, with whom peace talks stalled last year.

"Most probably, the two aircrafts (crashed) were on a special and exceptional mission and the order was not merely for a normal rotation" of troops in the buffer zone, Sheikh Qasim said.

This was clear from the type of aircraft and the "elite units" of soldiers and officers on board, as well as the amount of supplies and weaponry the two helicopters were carrying, he said.

A debate inside Israel about the continued presence of troops in southern Lebanon began after the crash, and was given further momentum when seven Israeli soldiers were wounded on Sunday in clashes with Hizbullah guerrillas.

On Saturday, Israeli legislators from across the political spectrum met with former security officials for an unprecedented discussion on a possible unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Israel Radio reported.

The debate has crossed party lines and moved the issue of Lebanon to centre stage in Israeli politics.

Mr. Netanyahu urged members of parliament and public figures not to talk about a unilateral withdrawal.

"This talk, during days of mourning and turbulent emotions, is likely to

encourage the terrorists in Lebanon to increase their attacks on Israeli soldiers," Mr. Netanyahu said in a statement Sunday.

"We are not in Lebanon to rule, but rather to ensure the security of the northern settlements. As long as this goal obligates our remaining in Lebanon, we will continue to act in this manner."

Seven Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon were wounded Sunday when Hizbullah guerrillas threw hand grenades and fired rifles at an Israeli outpost. Israel retaliated with air raids on suspected guerrilla hideouts and heavy artillery fire.

Ten prominent figures met Saturday night, including Michael Eitan of the ruling Likud Party, and Gideon Ezra, a Likud lawmaker and former deputy chief of the Shin Bet security service responsible for undercover activity in South Lebanon.

Also present was opposition Labour Party legislator Yossi Beilin, who advocates unilateral Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon and the replacement of Israeli forces with French or American troops.

Mr. Eitan told the Associated Press that current army commanders are unwilling to change their policy in Lebanon because they were involved in the decisions which led to the current involvement.

"We want a fresh look at the situation, untrammelled by the past," he said.

Germans in festive mood, but with a bit of politics

A car depicting the planned single European currency, "Euro," parades through the streets of Mainz during carnival festivities on Monday. The sign in front reads "Euro — We don't give a damn," reflecting the mood of many Germans vis-a-vis the European Union's moves towards a single currency for all its members by the year 1999 (Reuters photo)



Saddam plans elite security force

AMMAN (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has delegated a special committee to create a new elite armed force within three months, Iraqi sources in Amman said Monday.

According to the sources, the elite group, of which the Iraqi president will be the top commander, will be led by Qusai, his youngest son.

The body will be formed from the units of all the forces of the army — land, air and sea — security services, the Republican Guard, emergency units, the Fedayeen militia, and the security forces of the president and of the Military Industrialisation Organisation.

The force is to be named "the Army of Qadissiyeh and Umm Al Maarek," according to the same sources.

Iraq used the term "Qadissiyeh," the name of an Arab victory over the Persians in the 7th century, for the 1980-1988 war against Iran, and "Umm Al Maarek" (mother of all battles) for the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait.

The new unit was set up after a number of defections in the army and amid concern in the security services following the serious wounding on Dec. 12 in Baghdad of the eldest son of the Iraqi president, Uday. The Iraqi president wants a new force to guarantee total loyalty, according to the sources.

Qusai Saddam Hussein, in direct line to succeed the president, will head the committee that will include Izzat Al Duri and Samir Abdul Aziz Najem, two members of the Revolutionary Command Council, Iraq's highest ruling body.

The special guard will oversee the Republican Guard and the emergency forces. The Fedayeen forces have been managed by General Mezhem Al Saab since their commander Uday was injured, the same sources reported.

According to the sources, the different corps of the Iraqi army have held manoeuvres in the north and south of the country to select the best units for the new force.

Would-be suicide drops in for coffee, creams man

TEL AVIV (R) — Max Dadashvili was drinking coffee at an Israeli cafe when a would-be suicide dropped in. Dadashvili, 26, ended up in hospital with a broken back. The 72-year-old man who jumped on him from a balcony three storeys above him got up unscathed. "I looked very carefully before I leapt to make sure I wouldn't fall on somebody," the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper on Monday quoted the jumper telling police after the weekend incident in the atrium of a Swank Tel Aviv shopping and apartment complex. Interviewed from his hospital bed, Dadashvili, photographed in a neck brace, sounded an ironic note. "I have to lie here for six weeks, without moving," he said. "I am not angry but I don't understand why it was my neck he had to jump on. What rotten luck: nothing happens to a person who wants to die but I want to live and I get whacked." Police told the newspaper they are considering whether to file assault charges against the jumper, who tried to flee the scene, only to be stopped by stunned witnesses.

Volume 22 Number 1

French defence min

TEL AVIV (AFP) — French Defence Minister Michel Delebarre began a two-day visit to Israel on Monday. Mr. Delebarre is expected to hold talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Eitan Ben Eliahau. The visit is the first such meeting between the two defence ministers since the 1995 peace agreement. Mr. Delebarre is also expected to discuss the possibility of a joint military exercise between the two countries. He will also meet with the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff, General Shimon Peres, and the Israeli Air Force Commander, General Ezer Weizman.

Volume 22 Number 1

Israeli Palestine prisoners

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A last-minute appeal by Israeli judges delayed the scheduled release of 20 Palestinian prisoners due to be freed from Israeli jails under long-standing peace agreements, officials said.

Impeding a pardon ordered by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu under the terms of the 1995 Oslo peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians, prison authorities released six of 31 inmates slated for liberation Tuesday. Many of the detainees were implicated in Israeli attacks.

But the process halted when the supreme court issued a injunction late in the day barring the release of six other members of the group who had been arrested after the Oslo agreement was signed. The rest of those still in jail then remained in solitary confinement.

The court was acting on an appeal lodged by a group called the "Victims of Terrorism Association," which had a first petition against the releases rejected by the supreme court Monday.

The court was due to meet late Tuesday to reconsider the cases of the six, but it refused to call off the other prisoners, the spokesman said.

Israeli plane radio station Syria to cur

BAALBEK (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes Tuesday raided the ancient city of Baalbek in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, destroying a radio station run by Hizbullah, Lebanese security officials said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that continuing attacks on Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon would not keep him from trying to rekindle peace talks with Syria.

"A full-scale attack on Lebanon is not a condition for resuming negotiations with Syria," Mr. Netanyahu told reporters during a visit to the Israeli-Lebanese border zone.

"We must attempt by the Syrians to impose preconditions for resuming talks with us. There is no reason for us to set any," he said, referring to demands by Damascus that Israel enter peace negotiations with a promise to withdraw from the Golan Heights.

Reiterating Israeli accusations that Damascus was ultimately responsible for actions of anti-Israeli guerrillas in Lebanon, Mr. Netanyahu added, "It is obvious though that peace negotiations cannot succeed if Syria is indirectly waging war against Israel."

He went on to call on Syria, which has 25,000 troops in Lebanon, "to act firmly and directly to arm Lebanon."

Mr. Netanyahu is expected to discuss ways of resuming negotiations with Syria when he visits Wash-

Rafsanjani spares U.S. as Iran marks revolution anniversary

TEHRAN (AFP) — Hundreds of thousands of Iranians took to the streets Monday in a nationwide celebration of the 18th anniversary of the Islamic revolution which toppled the pro-American shah.

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, in a speech at Azadi (freedom) square, spared the United States from attack on the anniversary and instead listed Iran's "achievements" since the 1979 revolution.

"Thanks to the revolution, Iran today is the most independent country in the world. Freedom here has reached a perfect level. We have made economic progress and our people have a greater hope for the future," he said.

"We suffered to see western embassies running our affairs before the revolution and dictating their way of life to us," the president said. "Now we take all the decision ourselves."

Mr. Rafsanjani praised the large turnout for the celebrations, saying it was like an "infinite ocean" and a mass vote in favour of the Islamic republic, founded by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Khomeini, the country's late spiritual leader who died in 1989, had run his Islamic Revolutionary Council from France after being exiled in Iraq for 14 years for opposing the shah.

He returned to a tumultuous welcome in Tehran on Feb. 1, 1979 after the shah had fled the previous month and just 10 days later, the government of Shapur Bakhtiar fell.

In a rare move in Monday's celebrations, Mr. Rafsanjani avoided launching an attack on the United States, a factor which has become a hallmark of political rallies in Iran since the revolution.

His moderate tone was also in contrast to official propaganda over the past week directed at the "Great Satan," a term used to describe the United States.

A resolution read out to the crowd charged that "America is the chief among the world oppressors because of its support for Zionism and hostility toward Muslim nations."

"The Iranian Muslim people will direct its full revolutionary anger at the decaying empire of the great Satan," it added, voicing support for militants fighting Israel.

Demonstrators, including many children, appeared relaxed and shouted few slogans against Israel and the United States, although many carried placards denouncing Iran's two arch-enemies.

The signs were mostly provided by the Islamic coalition organisation, a powerful conservative political group backed the ruling Shiite Muslim clergy.

Among the crowds, there were also many young Afghan refugees who work in Iran as manual labourers.

Several groups of teenagers, wearing red and green headbands to mark their willingness to die for Islam, marched among the crowds chanting revolutionary slogans.

"I am here to defeat America," said a 10-year-old boy. Moh-en, repeating anti-

American messages which have filled the airwaves in the past few days. But he said he was also there to enjoy himself and play with other children.

Ali Akbar Hosseini, a parliament member who as a clergyman also hosts a television program on family morality, was leading a large group of relatives to the rally.

"We are here to renew our allegiance with Imam Khomeini in his crusade against decadence," he said.

Pedlars took advantage of the occasion to sell colorful balloons, sandwiches and snacks as many families picnicked on the grass on a cold but sunny day.

Relieved from the rigors of the fasting month of Ramadan, young men strolled around, cracking sunflower seeds or smoking, and children munched on ice-cream cones.

Iran's main armed opposition group on Monday warned the country's Islamic government that its days were numbered, 18 years after they both took part in the revolution that toppled the Shah.

"From a political, social and economic standpoint, the clerical regime is reaching the end of the line," said a statement received by afp in Caracas from Massoud Rajavi, leader of the Baghdad-based Mujahadeen.

Mr. Rajavi, whose group took part in the Iraq uprising, praised the Iranian people for the "anti-monarchic" revolution.

But he turned his wrath on his former allies, the clergy, who split with the Mujahadeen within a year of the revolution.

"In our country 15 million people are unemployed, three to four million are drug addicts and 25 million are homeless. The mullahs have plundered some \$300 billion of oil wealth," said Mr. Rajavi, who also leads the national council of resistance of Iran.

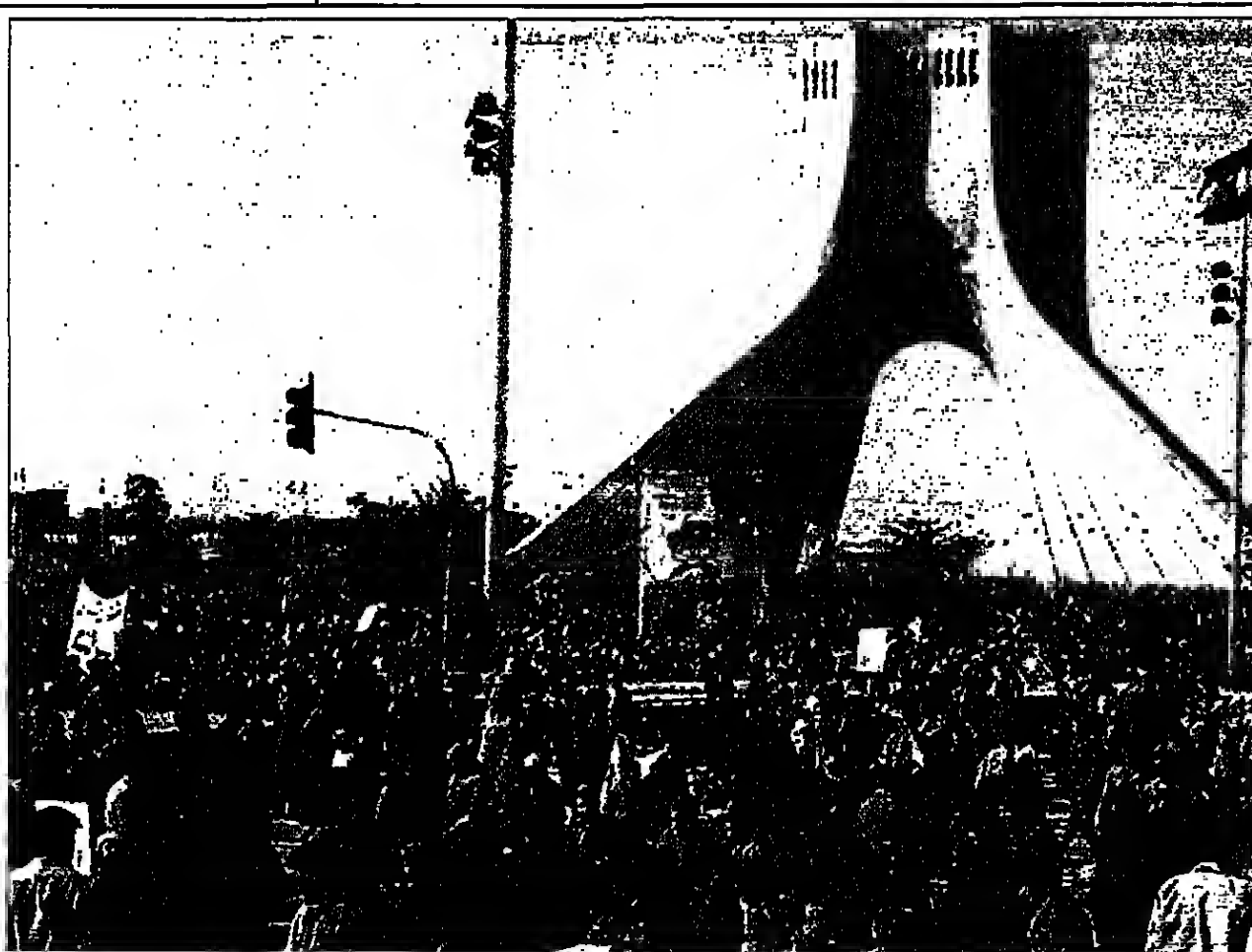
He accused the Islamic government of "stepping up oppression and exporting terrorism," saying 32 dissidents were executed abroad during 1996.

The Mujahadeen broke ranks with the Shiite clergy, after accusing the clerics of trying to monopolise power.

Mr. Rajavi was barred from running for president, and Mujahadeen gatherings were attacked by groups of club-wielding diehard supporters of the clergy.

The Mujahadeen responded by launching a bloody campaign against the government, killing 80 officials in a single bomb attack on the headquarters of the ruling Islamic Republic Party in June 1981.

The Mujahadeen's military wing, the national liberation army, was created 10 years ago with the aim of overthrowing the Islamist government in Tehran and its fighters frequently launch cross-border attacks from Iraq.



People gather in Azadi square in Tehran on Friday to celebrate the 18th anniversary of the Iranian revolution (AFP photo)

Israelis debate amnesty for Jewish extremists

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A possible amnesty for Jews jailed for anti-Arab attacks has unleashed a heated debate in Israel on Sunday as the government prepared to free women Palestinian prisoners convicted of anti-Israeli attacks.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that Israel would soon release 23 women prisoners, who were due to have been freed more than a year ago under peace accords signed between Israel and the Palestinians.

He also proposed a study by Israeli President Ezer Weizman on the "feasibility of freedom for Jews convicted for nationalist motives," according to government officials.

Mr. Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat are due to meet on Sunday at Erez crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip to discuss various outstanding issues on the peace

process, including the fate of Palestinian prisoners.

Israel's supreme court, ruling on an appeal against their release by a group representing "victims of terrorism," ordered the suspension of all prisoner releases until Monday, court sources said.

The ruling appears to be little more than symbolic as the Palestinian women, four of whom were involved in deadly attacks against Israelis, are not due to be released until Tuesday or Wednesday, according to a Netanyahu aide.

Michael Kleiner, a deputy in Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party, lodged a petition with Mr. Weizman two weeks ago signed by 13 deputies demanding the liberation of 12 Jewish prisoners.

They include Ami Poper, who killed seven Palestinian workers and injured a dozen others in a shooting spree near Tel Aviv in May 1990.

and Yoram Shkolnick, who was convicted in 1993 for killing a Palestinian after tying his hands up in a Jewish settlement near Hebron in the West Bank.

Mr. Kleiner said the petition raised the "problem of equality between Jews and Arabs, while the Arabs killed in cold blood and the Jews acted through strong emotions and only as a response."

but Uzi Benziman, writing an editorial in the liberal newspaper Haaretz, described the possible amnesty as "racist" and "yet another attack on the rule of law by the Netanyahu government."

"(An amnesty) encourages Jews to kill Arabs by promising them impunity," he said, adding that if the logic of the amnesty was followed through, even Ygal Amir, the Jewish extremist who assassinated former Prime Minister, Yitzhak

Rabin in November 1995, could go free.

Yuval Genbar, a researcher for Betsalem, the human rights organisation in the Palestinian territories, opposed any plans to free the Israelis because they had not been judged "with the same severity as the Palestinians, whose convictions were not done according to international judicial standards."

However, Fred Shkolnic, the father of Yoram Shkolnick, said the families of the Jewish prisoners deplored the "flagrant discrimination between Arab and Jewish detainees."

Offa Poper, the sister of Rami Poper, said in an interview with Maariv newspaper that there should not be one law for the Jews and another for Arabs.

"All the Jews should be freed the same day as the Palestinians," she said.

Rio carnival on high gear

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Rio de Janeiro's carnival shifted into top gear as Ronald Fick, Parrot Joe Carioca and a flood of other Disney characters kicked off the first of two dusk-to-dawn parades by Rio's Samba school elite. The enormous cartoon-figure replicas delighted the crowds packed into Rio's 70,000-capacity Sambadrome Stadium, but the g-string-clad, bare-breasted dancing girls Rio's carnival orgy is famous for were noticeably absent from the opening act. Disney agreed to finance much of the parade by the Academias da Rocinha Samba School from Latin America's largest shantytown on the condition that there would be no nudity.

Camilla's ex says she can wed Charles

LONDON (R) — The former husband of Camilla Parker Bowles has told friends he hopes his ex-wife will win public acceptance and marry Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, the Sunday Express newspaper reported. "Andrew Parker Bowles has confided that he believes public opinion should support the prince in his dream of one day making Camilla his wife," said the paper. The paper said retired army officer Parker Bowles — at one time the nation's best-known cuckold — recently surprised friends at a dinner party by saying: "They would certainly have my blessing."